Strickland Freeman Esq.r

Fawley Court, **BUCKS,**

1810.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Marquis DE ROSELLE.

IN

A SERIES of LETTERS.

BY

anne Louise Morin-Dumont

Madam ELIE DE BEAUMONT.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH.

In TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE

BY

The TRANSLATOR.

TO exhibit true and faithful pictures of life and manners; to place Virtue in the most amiable, and Vice in the most odious light; to deduce rational precepts from natural examples; and to amend the heart in improving the mind: Such appears to be the truly moral design of the following Letters; in which, the ingenious Author, by displaying a

delicacy of ſentiment and eaſe of expreſſion, almoſt peculiar to writers of her own ſex and country, hath given the moſt convincing proofs of the powerful and pleaſing efficacy of the united efforts of ſenſe and ſenſibility.

Preceded by the writings of two ſuch maſters as *Richardſon* and *Rouſſeau*, theſe Letters of *Madam Elie de Beaumont* will indeed lie under all the diſadvantages of a partial compariſon and imputed imitation. If they do not poſſeſs, however, all that ſpirit and vivacity we meet with in *Clariſſa*, or equal the nerve and pathos we find in *Eloiſa*, they are, on the other hand, neither ſo minute and trivial in their deſcription, nor ſo prolix and tedious in the narration. With regard to conſtruction of fable, probability of fact, and propriety of character, this work is alſo leſs exceptionable than either of the

admired

admired pieces abovementioned. Again, in point of ſtyle and compoſition, theſe Letters are held, by good Judges, to be equal, if not ſuperior, to both.

The allowed merit of this performance, therefore, will be a ſufficient apology for the Tranſlator's attempt to render it into Engliſh. As he does not flatter himſelf, however, that he hath always ſucceeded in transfuſing the eaſe and elegance of the *original* into the *tranſlation*, he hath only to hope, that he hath done the fair Author as little injuſtice as the nature of the caſe would admit. He muſt beg leave, nevertheleſs, to except from this inſinuation, ſeveral of the Letters in the firſt Volume; with the tranſlation of which he was obligingly favoured, from the elegant and maſterly pen of the TRANSLATOR OF ELOISA.

LETTERS

OF THE

Marquis de ROSELLE.

LETTER I.

From the Countess de Saint-Sever *to the Marquis* de Roselle.

Paris, Nov. 18.

UNITED by that tender friendship, which you, my dear brother, as well as myself, have always thought essential to our happiness; your love is become so dear to me, that the least coldness or indifference cannot fail to give me the most mortifying uneasiness. I shall endeavour, therefore, not to expose myself to such an event. You know the sentiments of my heart, and I am too well acquainted with yours, to think I shall commit any act of

indiſcretion, in conjuring you to explain the motives of your late behaviour.

You have quitted the apartments I took for you, near my own; you are gone to lodge at a diſtant part of the town; I ſee you not ſo often as I uſed to do; I know not—but I fear—I am alarmed, perhaps without a reaſon—I wiſh I may be ſo happy as to find my apprehenſions groundleſs. Are your affections, my dear brother, unchanged? Satisfy my heart in this particular; that heart which you have at all times found ſo tender and affectionate. Perhaps the advice, I took the liberty to give you, was diſpleaſing. But, reflect that I am your ſiſter; nay, that I am more than a ſiſter; you have neither father nor mother to direct you, and are juſt entered into life. The corps, to which you now belong, will neceſſarily bring you acquainted with a number of young people, who will influence you to partake of their pleaſures, and of the dangerous conſequences attending them. A young man, who, at the age of twenty years, finds himſelf, like you, his own maſter, precipitated into the vortex of the world, and its allurements, ſtands in need of advice: He need neither bluſh to receive nor to aſk it.

it. Is it poſſible for you to have any real friends? Solid friendſhips are not contracted at your age. The attachments of youth are warm and violent; the moſt adviſeable, however, are the more prudential. You, my dear brother, have but one friend; a tender, a ſincere friend; one that hath had more experience than yourſelf, and merits your utmoſt regard: And can you neglect her? I have ſpoken to you on the ſubject of marriage; perhaps the propoſal was diſpleaſing? But I did not pretend to lay you under any reſtraint: Real tenderneſs and true friendſhip are never imperious; they propoſe, but exact nothing. I conceived I was ſpeaking to you of an honourable and advantageous eſtabliſhment: I muſt own to you, I ſhould be glad to ſee you married. You owe that duty to your name and family; your heart is honeſt and ſuſceptible: You cannot fail, therefore, of being happy in ſuch a connection with an amiable and deſerving woman. In ſaying this, my dear brother, I regard you as my ſon; will you not forgive my ſolicitude? I have heſitated long about writing; as I ſhould have rather choſen to come to a perſonal explanation with you on the ſubject. But this, I per-

ceived, you ſtudiouſly avoided. Anſwer me then freely; open to me your whole heart, as a friend, a brother, a ſon; reſting aſſured that you can never forfeit the regard of your affectionate ſiſter.

LETTER II.

From the Marquis de Roſelle *to Madam* de Saint-Sever.

WHENCE, my dear ſiſter, theſe ſtrange ſuſpicions? Is it poſſible you can doubt of being infinitely dear to me! Entertain not, I conjure you, ſo injurious an idea of me. I love, I eſteem, I could almoſt ſay revere you, but that term might poſſibly diſpleaſe. The tenderneſs of your friendſhip, and that intereſt which you take in all my concerns, deſerve the utmoſt acknowledgment: But do not, my dear ſiſter, be either afflicted or ſurprized that I ſee you not ſo often as I could wiſh. The connections which I have formed, by entering on my new ſituation, keep me from you in ſpite of myſelf. Your advice, however excellent with regard to morals in general,

general, is not alone ſufficient to regulate my preſent conduct. An acquaintance with men, converſant with mankind, is now become neceſſary: Permit me, therefore, to cultivate the friendſhip of ſuch as may guide me in the world, on which I have entered. The moſt rational, the moſt virtuous principles are no ſecurity againſt the ſhafts of ridicule. You forgive every thing but vice; the world forgives every thing but what is ridiculous. The company you keep is reſpectable, but too reſerved; you live, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, in a family-way, with a few friends, who have nothing to recommend themſelves but their virtues. I hold them, I confeſs, in great eſteem; but their ſociety is by no means ſufficient for me. I am now in the world, and muſt neceſſarily ſee the world. I am obliged to you for the propoſition of marriage; but I beg of you to preſs me no farther on that head. The more reſpectable ſuch a connection appears to me, the more fearful am I to engage in it. I am, indeed, ſo very young, that you would render both me and the woman I ſhould marry unhappy. I muſt love, before I think of marriage. And we cannot love where or whom we will.

Adieu, my dear ſiſter, be aſſured of my warmeſt friendſhip; nor entertain the leaſt ſuſpicion that its ardour can abate: Forgive my involuntary abſence; and, I again conjure you, ſpeak to me no more of marriage.

LETTER III.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Nov. 18.

I Could be ſilent no longer, my dear friend; but have at length written to my brother. The incloſed is his anſwer. You will ſee it is polite, it is friendly, but not kind and tender. He gives me reaſons, but they are not ſatisfactory. My people have diſcovered that he has formed ſome private connections, as I have already informed you. This privacy, my friend, proclaims him guilty. He pretends to be deſirous of ſeeing the world. To this I conſent: But it is with me he ſhould live. Good God! how much uneaſineſs doth he give me! Oh! that I could but recall thoſe happy days; when, at the age of childhood and innocence, he had no other confident than me! You know, my dear, how much he deſerves to be loved. Add to this, that

he

he is at present the only hope of our family. He had never the opportunity of profiting by the example of a father, who was so early taken off, at the head of his regiment, in Italy, that I myself can hardly remember him. My dying mother, you know, recommended this son, the dear object of her tenderest affections, to my care. "Be to him, said she, both father and mother—to this end I deliver him into the hands of you and your husband. Be both of you careful to direct him in his youth. He will be susceptible of violent passions; endeavour to preserve him from their attendant evils." These, the last words of a respectable and tenderly beloved mother, are written as a law in my heart, from which I will never swerve. I feel a double satisfaction, therefore, in reflecting, that I am obeying a mother in being watchful over the happiness of her son. At present, however, this reflection increases my apprehensions and disquietude. The only certain method to prevent the evils I dread, would be an agreeable and advantageous marriage; for which reason I never lose sight of this project. I have a mind to bring him acquainted with the Misses de St. Albin; the eldest would be a proper match for him;

But then I ſo greatly fear thoſe ſecret connections, of which I was ſpeaking to you. Not that I apprehend he aſſociates with men of abandoned characters; he hath a due ſenſe of his own honour; but he may be impoſed on: And you know the fallacious principles of moſt young men, who think it no diſhonour to keep company with the vileſt and moſt abandoned of women; conceiving that, if they are not ſeen with them in public, they are permitted to viſit them familiarly in private; no inference, however, can be more abſurd: But ſuch abſurdities are the natural effect of vice.

After all, ought I to ſearch any farther into what my brother is deſirous to keep from me? or ought I rather to truſt him to himſelf, by giving into a dangerous or falſe ſecurity? I expect from your friendſhip and experience your advice on this head. Adieu.

LETTER IV.

From Madam de Narton *to Madam* de Saint-Sever.

Paris, Nov. 20.

I Enter, my dear Counteſs, into all your apprehenſions, and partake of your ſoli-

citude.

citude. I muſt confeſs, that air of myſtery, which I diſcover in your brother's letter, gives me uneaſineſs. You are certainly in the right: When people ſecrete themſelves, it is not without cauſe. Be fearful, however, but be not affrighted. You are not to flatter yourſelf, that your brother is to give into none of the follies of his age. It is hardly poſſible not to be ſeduced by ſuch a multiplicity of bad examples. It is in vain alſo that your prudence is offended at every thing, which does not ſquare with the purity of your own intentions. He may be wild, but his heart is honeſt, and will in time reform him. You have hitherto kept him always under your eye; but he is now no longer a child, nor ſhould be treated as ſuch. Be watchful over his conduct; but ſeem to truſt him with it entirely himſelf. Your brother is now in the world; which is to him as a new and ſtrange country, where he will naturally be ſurprized at every thing. The world preſents a very enchanting proſpect to a perſon of his age. He will doubtleſs be hurried away with the torrent, and lead at firſt a life of diſſipation; he will form intrigues, indulge his paſſions, and fall into ſome errors; I hope, however, from the goodneſs of his under-

underſtanding, his natural diſpoſition, his education, and your prudence, that he will not proceed ſo far as to fall into vices; or at leaſt, if he ſhould, that he will ſoon forſake them: the ſeeds of virtue have taken too deep root in his heart to permit him to do otherwiſe. When once young men have acquired a taſte for the world and its pleaſures, nothing but experience can undeceive them; prudential remonſtrances, unleſs very artfully diſguiſed indeed, are ineffectual, without experience. Nay, there are innumerable truths which they are not even in a ſituation to comprehend. With regard to the Marquis, I will yet do my beſt. Here, indeed, I ſeldom ſee him; but I ſhall know what he is about from Mr. de Ferval, who is frequently a party in his pleaſures. Be not alarmed too ſoon, but compoſe yourſelf, my dear Counteſs. I hope ſhortly to be able to ſend you news of him. In the mean time, endeavour to draw him to your houſe, by ſome agreeable amuſement. Innocent pleaſures are the only means to create in him a diſguſt againſt the contrary. Let all your tenderneſs be diſplayed in your endeavours to divert and entertain him; giving it, at the ſame time, an air of confidence in his diſcretion. Expreſs

always

always respect and esteem for him: This is a very good way to prevent ingenuous minds from such actions as may render them unworthy of them. Never be importunate, or betray a troublesome curiosity, about his conduct; affecting ever to be ignorant, and as indifferent about knowing what he chuses to conceal. This piece of address is very necessary in the management of young people; who cannot bear the thoughts of constraint and dependence, nor any thing which hath that appearance. Their ruling passions are for liberty and diversions. Obliging relations should seem therefore to indulge them, by contributing to their gratification; a complacence which confirms their power, and can never be hurtful. How great, indeed, is our power over those by whom we are beloved! Your brother loves you, and I am almost assured, from his character and disposition, that it is not wildness, or the mere desire of liberty, which makes him absent himself. It is upon this circumstance that my hopes, and indeed my suspicions too, are founded.

If it should be a love-affair, you will soon perceive it; as, if he be deeply affected, he will endeavour for some time to hide his affection; lovers delight in secrecy; you will

will obſerve him abſent, muſing, and diſturbed. If the object be worthy of him, he will not be long before he acquaints you with the ſituation of his heart. He will be deſirous of imparting to you his ſentiments; you will become his confidante, and be more ardently beloved by him than ever.

If, on the other hand, he ſhould have unhappily attached himſelf to a deſpicable object, he will make uſe of every opportunity to withdraw himſelf, and to excuſe his abſence. He will be ſo far from ſeeking, that he will, on all occaſions, ſhun your company. In ſuch a caſe, my dear, the greateſt care ſhould be taken, to conceal thoſe cautionary meaſures which would be neceſſary to his ſafety. But this ſuppoſition is perhaps groundleſs; do not, therefore, too readily give into it. I am ſo nearly intereſted in what affects you, that my imagination ſuggeſts the worſt that may happen.

I think you would do well to ſpare your advice, at leaſt till the Marquis may aſk it. The leaſt evil it can be productive of, when given unaſked, is that of being troubleſome to the receiver; and then it is always uſeleſs. Your advice, indeed, may become dangerous; as it may occaſion the Marquis

to

to keep himſelf at a ſtill greater diſtance from you; he will be apt to regard your counſels as leſſons; and leſſons are ever diſpleaſing. Add to this, that nothing is more to be dreaded, then the inſtilling a habit of hearing good advice without paying it attention; or with an actual intention of not following it; or, what is ſtill worſe, with a deſign to elude its force, or to pervert it to the confirmation of one's intereſt or inclinations. This, my dear, is always the caſe with young people agitated by warm paſſions, whoſe indiſcreet relations are peſtering them with advice, at times when they are not capable of liſtening to it, and ſtill much leſs to purſue it: We ſhould not be prodigal of the truth, but reſerve it for critical and deciſive occaſions, when it ſhould be repreſented in all its force; by which means, it is ſometimes productive of the greateſt effects.

I would alſo by no means adviſe you to ſpeak to your brother of marriage; you hear what he ſays to you on that ſubject. His reluctance does not at all ſurprize me; it is the conſequence of his taſte for independency. Almoſt all young people think as he does; all their virtuous relations ought to think as you do. Your deſign is rational; but

but let it not be too apparent. If your brother is of a different way of thinking, you will make him ſtill more ſo, and ſtill leſs fond of your company. In order to engage him to marry, love muſt be our director. We then need only leave him to the impulſes of his own heart. Endeavour to bring him acquainted with amiable young women; I approve highly of that project.

But I muſt not fail again to recommend to you, my dear, by no means to betray any curioſity about his conduct. Never reduce him to the temptation of deceiving you: You will thus render falſhood habitual. At firſt a ſeeming neceſſity may force him to it, tho' it may hurt him; but afterwards diſſimulation will become familiar; he will make a jeſt of it, and all is loſt. Be particularly careful to preſerve the ingenuouſneſs and candour of his diſpoſition. I would have him even perceive, from your reſerve, the fear you are under of deceiving him into an occaſion of ſpeaking an untruth. This cannot fail of creating in him a deteſtation againſt a vice, into which an indiſcreet ſeverity hath plunged ſo many young people.

Conſtraint, I ſay again, gives riſe to diſſimulation, and this to that degree of falſhood, which

which neceſſarily brings with it a meanneſs of ſpirit, that excludes all hope.

Such, my dear Counteſs, are the reflections which your preſent circumſtances have occaſioned. Weigh them. I only point out to you that path I ſhould purſue, were I in your ſituation. Depend on my aſſiduity. My young friend may poſſibly ſerve us. Adieu, my dear; depend on it, your intereſts are mine.

LETTER V.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Nov. 24.

THE juſtneſs of your reflections, my kind friend, has corrected mine. I perceived the neceſſity of procuring amuſements for my brother; but you have diſplayed the danger of my giving him counſel. I acquieſce, and, however difficult, will, for the future, with-hold my advice. I have indeed already begun. He came to ſee me today; when I perceived him muſing, penſive, and under ſome conſtraint. On my part, I expreſſed all that pleaſure I felt in ſeeing him; by which he accordingly ſeemed affected,

fected; I then invited him to ſup with me the day after to-morrow; which he promiſed with a tolerable good grace. After which promiſe, I ſent and made ſure of Madam de St. Albin and her two daughters. I have long projected this interview; you know thoſe young ladies; they have beauty, and are juſt come out of a convent, where they have received the beſt education; their modeſty is equal to their accompliſhments; their mother hath ſpared nothing to render them amiable; they are very rich, and their family is of diſtinction; in ſhort, I conceive the parties excellent for a match. I ſhall be extremely rejoiced, my dear, if my brother could make choice of the elder. I intend to give our ſupper the air of an entertainment: For which reaſon, I have invited ſeveral agreeable friends, and ſome young perſons of wit. I deſign alſo to prevail on the two miſſes de St. Albin to ſing. After ſupper I purpoſe farther to give a little ball; in a word, I ſhall neglect nothing that may contribute to our diverſions. I will give you an account of the effects of my preparations and deſign. My huſband, indeed, turns the whole into raillery. He does not believe either of the young Ladies will pleaſe my brother, becauſe they

they have a ſtiff and reſerved air. For my part, however, I think their deportment the ſame as that of other young people well educated.

Adieu, my dear friend. If you need any aſſurance of my friendſhip, you may judge of it by the confidence I place in you.

LETTER VI.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Nov. 27.

MY brother hath by no means ſeconded my hopes; his politeneſs could not conceal his uneaſineſs. Both ſupper and ball were paſſed formally through with a gloomy indifference; though we did not break up till four in the morning. I exerted myſelf as much as poſſible to diffuſe an air of chearfulneſs and feſtivity; but to no purpoſe; I could not ſucceed. Alas! I fear your ſuſpicions are but too well founded. People are not diſguſted and tired with innocent and decent recreations, who are not unhappy enough to be acquainted with others. I was myſelf very much chagrined, but

dissembled so well that he did not perceive it. My design is to continue to act in the same manner; without being discouraged, I will endeavour to instruct and serve him without laying him under any restraint. This, my dear friend, is all I can say to you till I recover of the fatigue of this ball. Adieu, and believe I love you sincerely.

LETTER VII.

From Madam de Narton *to Madam* de Saint-Sever.

Paris, Nov. 28.

YOU ought not, my dear Countess, to be either discouraged or surprized. I foresaw, with Mr. de Saint-Sever, what would be the effect of your supper scheme. It is true, the Misses de St. Albin are pretty, and have received what is called the best education. But, my dear, they are not at all proper for your brother. They do not suit my taste, nor reconcile me to the method usually taken to form our young ladies. If I were to educate a daughter, I would take a very different one. It is not by means of those dry and formal precepts, those false and extravagant notions inculcated in

convents,

convents, that a young woman is insensibly prepared to make a proper figure in life, and to discharge the duties of a wife and mother. But, be this as it may, I cannot believe the Marquis could love; much less for a constancy, a woman with so much formality and so little nature.

Mr. de Ferval hath here interrupted me.

O! my dear friend, it is as I suggested; we have need of courage and vigilance; with these we may deliver your brother from all dangers. An evil is not great when it is known: We may then apply a proper remedy. The Marquis is hurried away by the custom of the multitude; it is our business to stop him. The world endeavour to make a young man of twenty, blush at being prudent; they persuade him it is ridiculous to have no intrigues, and thus oblige him, with or without inclination, to engage in them.

It is the fashion to keep opera women. They are easy of access and seductive; so that what might only prove an air of fashion, a piece of gallantry, in persons accustomed to intrigues, may be productive of a real passion in a raw and unexperienced youth. It is true these creatures are, for the most

part, too despicable, for us to fear their being long able to deceive ingenuous minds. Love either elevates or debases the soul, according to the object which inspires it. Your brother will soon be ashamed of his passion, will strive against it, and we will assist him entirely to overcome it. Be not terrified, my dear Countess, we have already a method to open his eyes with regard to his favourite Leonora. For such is the name of his mistress, a singer at the opera, excessively pretty, and extremely artful.

The behaviour of this woman sufficiently indicates the dangerous nature of her designs. She certainly practises the arts of coyness and severity, in order to secure the Marquis's affections. All her other lovers are dismissed, except one M. de la Roche, a rich old financier, who doats on her preposterously, and has his reasons for keeping his connections with her a secret. There is great cause to believe, she takes advantage of this secrecy, which he is obliged to keep, to receive him only at such hours as best suit her other purposes. Your brother, however, has no suspicion of this intrigue; but thinks himself her only lover.

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It is doubtleſs this Leonora, that cauſes him to abſent himſelf from your houſe: depend on it, it is ſhe. Diſſemble with him; affect to be entirely ignorant of his proceedings. Ferval, of whoſe zeal and aſſiduity I am aſſured, will neglect nothing to come at all the particulars of his conduct, and the progreſs of his amour. Be not alarmed, my dear Counteſs, let us alone, redouble your civilities, conceal your apprehenſions, and depend on our care.

LETTER VIII.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, Nov. 28.

THROW me not into deſperation, adorable creature; you have never been ſo paſſionately admired, you have confeſſed it to me. By what fatality is it that the tendereſt of lovers ſhould incur only your cruelty? What crime is it I have committed?—Crime! Can I be criminal! Can ſo ſincere a lover commit a crime againſt the object of his paſſion? Thou haſt prohibited me even the pleaſure of ſeeing you. Two days, two whole days are paſſed without the hope of—And canſt thou hate me? Good God!—

Yes, Leonora, you may justly be accused of cruelty; for what can possibly be your motives for such conduct? Deign at least to inform me of the cause. If—but I will not entertain so horrible an idea—My heart grows cold, I shudder at the thought. Explain thyself—No, rather keep from me—Yes, I would know the worst. If I am doomed to suffer thy hate—But you will be offended at this.—Forgive, oh! forgive, my dear Leonora, these involuntary transports. You know too well that I had rather die than displease you. Do not persist in driving me to despair; deign to write to me, to answer me, to mix some consolation with your severity; at least from pity if not from love. Adieu; the agitations of fear, love, and tenderness perplex and confound all my ideas. Heavens! What a state of mind! Permit me, dear Leonora; to see you to-day. Refuse me not this favour—You must not—I fly to your presence.

LETTER IX.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Nov. 28.

YOUR passion, my dear Marquis, affects me; but how mortifying are your suspicions!

picions! Can you not forgive that I ſhould, in the leaſt, merit your eſteem? Your virtues have inſpired me with ſo much for you, they have caſt ſuch a ray of light over my ſoul, that, inſtead of complaining, you ought to approve its effect. Yes, my dear Marquis, it is to you I owe a deſire, a taſte, for virtue. Nature, indeed, had planted the ſeeds in my heart; but you have cauſed them to germinate. Neither the rigour of my fortune, nor the cruelty of my parents, in bringing me up to ſo dangerous and ſeductive a profeſſion; not all the temptations it hath unhappily ſubjected me to, could eradicate its precious germ from my heart. But, diſſipation, the force of example, and what, alas! is ſtill worſe, indigence, horrible indigence, have long held that fatal bandage, which you have cauſed to fall from mine eyes. You have little reaſon to complain of my heart. It is that which pleads for you, and makes me forget the injuſtice of your ſuſpicions. I hope I may put ſo much confidence in your complacency for me, as to be aſſured you will not come to-day. I wiſh I may be able to ſee you any other without danger. Adieu, my dear Marquis, it is to be hoped you will know Leonora better.

LETTER X.

From the Marquis to Mr. de Valville.

Paris, Nov. 30.

YESTERDAY, my dear Valville, I ſaw Leonora, who has reſtored my heart to its uſual ſerenity; I am aſſured of her affection. Even her repulſes are ſo kind and tender, that I ſhould be pleaſed with them, if I were leſs in love. Her mind is, indeed, replete with delicacy. It is her love, it is her virtue, my friend, that renders me unhappy: And at that price I can conſent to be ſo.—No, I hope ſtill to overcome her reluctance; I will triumph over it by force of my own tenderneſs; ſuch a triumph will but add to my happineſs. The ſuſpicions I imparted to you the other day were altogether groundleſs. How ſincerely do I reproach myſelf for them; ſince ſhe has effaced them without even endeavouring at her own juſtification. Caſt off, my dear friend, any prejudices which my angry jealouſy may have given you againſt her. Indeed, you know but little of Leonora, and are apt to confound her with her aſſociates.—No, Valville, ſhe is an object worthy of my heart; ſhe has engroſſed

engroſſed it; and I am no longer engaged in an intrigue, but have contracted a real paſſion. A real paſſion! — and for Leonora! — It is even ſo; I will not retract what I have ſaid. — I feel — But thou art the only perſon in the world, to whom I can open my heart on this occaſion. Forgive thoſe effuſions, of which it really ſtands in need. I am much afraid my ſiſter will diſcover my paſſion. She is a very deſerving woman, to whom I am obliged as to a mother. She is very dear to me; but her prejudices are as great as her virtues. I know that ſhe would think me totally ruined, if ſhe knew of this attachment of mine to the moſt amiable of women. To an opera-girl! That, that would be enough to involve her in the greateſt affliction. I muſt be very cautious, therefore, of my behaviour, on her account; and that even before my own ſervants.

She has a mind I ſhould marry. Judge whether I can give into her propoſal. I ſupped with her two days ago, in conſequence of an invitation ſhe gave me three days before: When it had been eaſy for me to ſee through her deſigns, had her huſband, M. de Saint-Sever, thought proper to leave

leave it to my own penetration. I had hardly entered the houſe, when he took me aſide, and, with an air of ſecrecy, extolled the beauty, accompliſhments, and particularly the fortune of Miſs de St. Albin: from which I immediately ſaw into the ſcheme, and was confirmed in my opinion, by being very particularly preſented to Madam de St. Albin and her two daughters. The company, which was pretty numerous, were all met when I arrived, and conſiſted, firſt, of ladies, to whom I ſhould very willingly give the appellation of agreeable, if they did not affect that of pretty; ſecondly, of ſenſible men, who laboured to be entertaining; thirdly, of frigid ſcholars, who ſet up for wits; and laſtly, of boys and girls, timid, aukward, and baſhful. You may judge from the ſingle figures what muſt be the effect of the groupe. The converſation ſoon began to flag; on which cards were introduced: I played a game or two, and won, but was tired to death, notwithſtanding Miſs de St. Albin was of the party. It muſt be confeſſed that both ſhe and her ſiſter are pretty; but ſo reſerved and formal! It was with difficulty I could hear a word they ſaid; ſpeaking ſo extremely low and with their eyes always fixed on their

mama.

mama. It seems, they were set upon displaying their talents, the eldest singing while the youngest played on the harpsichord. Thus we were entertained with a cantata, which by their manner one would have taken for the *Stabat** of Pergolese.

These two beauties are just come out of a convent. I should have almost taken them for two mutes, had I not remarked that, while their mama was at cards, and did not see them, they got into a corner to discourse quite low, with another young person of the same age. I listened a little to their conversation, but found it so very insipid, and their tongues so extremely voluble, that I soon left them to themselves. At table, I had the particular honour of being placed by the Misses de St. Albin, from whom it was hardly possible for me to get a single word. If I asked them any question, it was always answered with a reserved and formal *yes, sir*, or, *no, sir*; the good lady their mother ever taking upon herself to answer for them, if it went beyond a monosyllable.

* The *Stabat Mater*, a remarkable grave piece of church musick: Thus an Englishman might have said, on a like occasion, the hundredth *Psalm* or *The children in the wood.*

After

After ſupper, my ſiſter, being abſolutely determined to make the evening agreeable to me, propoſed the opening a ball; to which I found a good deal of company had been invited. Indeed, for ſo little an affair, it was very elegant and brilliant. We danced very decently, talking, however, only to the mothers: For as to the daughters, they reſembled ſtatutes moving about on ſprings. In a word, I do not believe that gloomineſs and diſguſt ever wore the maſk of gaiety with ſo ill a grace. It was neceſſary, notwithſtanding, to ſeem pleaſed, and to keep up this grave farce till four in the morning. For my part, I was moſt intolerably tired and chagrined; which I am ſorry my ſiſter perceived; tho' knowing myſelf the hero of the entertainment, I did all I could to carry it off with a good grace. Judge, my dear friend, from this project of my ſiſter, what I ſhould have to encounter, if ſhe knew the real ſtate of my heart. You ſee how much reaſon there is for my caution. Will you, therefore, take upon you the commiſſion of buying a chariot, which I have a mind to preſent to Leonora? You will oblige me in it eſſentially, as I cannot, for the above rea-

ſons,

ſons, make the purchaſe myſelf. Adieu, dear Valville. Your's ſincerely.

LETTER XI.

From Valville *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Dec. 1.

I Thought, Marquis, you had a great ſhare of underſtanding! Upon my honour I thought ſo! You have taken leſſons of a pretty able maſter, and have profited by them moſt egregiouſly! Come, come, I find you muſt not be truſted out of your leading-ſtrings. The firſt emotions of theſe young hearts are ſo violent; they are ſo very preſſing, that the underſtanding is not able to keep them within any bounds, when excited by the ſmalleſt allurement of a pretty female. Underſtanding! do I ſay?---No, no. To have underſtanding we muſt have a knowledge of the world. No people of your age poſſeſs underſtanding. Believe me, you are only hurried away by a blind and fooliſh inclination. I ſhall know exactly the true ſtate of your heart to-morrow. You grown children are very ſubject to miſtake your firſt palpi-

palpitations for a passion. I foresee it will be no easy matter to remove the effects of that wrong education you have received. You have been trained up for a man of noble sentiments and refined conduct; ridiculous! We never get any thing by being superior to those among whom we reside and converse. And, indeed, the truest philosophy is, to cultivate that species of merit which is most generally admired. I introduced you to Leonora, in order to give you the fashionable *ton*, and establish your reputation as a man of gallantry and taste; and you truly fall in love with her. How puerile and absurd! The whole affair now-a-days is to render one's self agreeable: There is no necessity for one's falling in love. This will never render one agreeable, unless, indeed, merely to the object of one's passion. Nothing more is requisite than gallantry, or the love of the sex in general. And this is natural; for are not all women so much like one another, that we may easily make an exchange between them. The taste for exclusive attachments is quite out of vogue. Instead of overcharging the heart with one grand passion, we divide its affection into a thousand little, light, transitory likings, tastes,

and

and attachments, (the ſmall money of love,) as people change gold into ſilver, preſerving ſtill the value of the whole. A convenient houſe, ſplendid equipages, agreeable entertainments, kind miſtreſſes, gallant adventures; all theſe little pleaſures amount to a conſiderable ſum of happineſs; enough, in conſcience, I ſhould think, for any reaſonable man.

As to the particular article of miſtreſſes; the faſhionable way is to take ſome celebrated Laïs into keeping; but not to put one's ſelf in her livery; to love her juſt ſo much as is neceſſary to make her company agreeable, and no more than will permit one to caſt her off, whenever one thinks it convenient.

You are very good, Marquis, to entertain an opinion of the virtue of women. But you would be a very great fool to place any confidence in that of an opera-girl. Leonora would paſs on you for a modeſt woman; ſhe knows her buſineſs. The artful jade! ſhe knows the way to entrap thoſe innocents, who wiſh to eſteem what they admire; let her alone for that; ſhe will diffuſe an odour of ſanctity throughout her whole family; and you, an unſuſpecting dupe, will run your noſe into the ſnare. She would lead you a fine dance, if ſome body better acquainted with

with female arts ſhould not come to your relief. Thou ſtandeſt in need of a director; and, if I knew one more capable than myſelf, I have ſo much regard for you, that I would recommend you to him: But I imagine that my abilities may be ſufficient. Follow the plan which I ſhall lay down for your conduct, and Leonora will, in a few days, be yours; Valville will anſwer for it. Begin immediately by throwing off that ſimple air of paſſion which by no means becomes you. Talk of love with an air of indifference and gaiety. Give your nymphs ſome hints of your generous inclinations; of your inclinations only — you underſtand me. — It is time enough to think in reality of the equipage you talk of. What *diſpoſitions* have you made together on that head? If you are deſirous of Leonora's ſpeedy compliance, appear to have taken up with ſome other miſtreſs; excite her jealouſy, give a check to her vanity, and alarm her avarice, (for ſhe is covetous,) in reſuming the chearful air of a man reſtored to his liberty; and, if you ſhould viſit her again, let it not be for ſome time, and then with indifference.

If you would immediately ſee through the deſign of her pretended virtue, aſſume the air

air of a man who knows the world; of thoſe to whom your ſiſter gives the appellation of Libertines. Affect to diſregard both women and their favours, and turn ſentiment into ridicule; be familiar with her, bold, free, forward, and ſo forth. Follow theſe directions, and the ſyren will ſoon fall into your ſnare: but if you do otherwiſe, depend on it you will be ſo hampered in her's as not to eſcape with impunity. Remember I tell you, you will become the jeſt of the public, and by this egregious piece of folly will loſe a thouſand favourite opportunities. Therefore well conſider it.

Make a reſolution alſo, in good earneſt to throw off the preceptorſhip of your ſiſter. What! to be eternally under the ferula! And pray, my good friend, how do you think ſhe is to form you for the world? She who is acquainted only with the virtues of our grand-mothers: She would make of you a good patriot, a good chriſtian. And what then? You might have the merit of the moſt celebrated of the old Romans; and what would it avail? Would you be the more careſſed, more rewarded, the better entertained, or the more happy. New times, new manners, my friend, is the beſt of all our old proverbs.

The virtue of our times is honour; not, indeed, that kind of honour, which was coveted by those bluſtering knights that ranſacked the world, like blockheads, in ſearch of dangerous adventures; but that of a man of gallantry, who does not debaſe himſelf by any act of meanneſs or cowardice. The antiquated virtue of our forefathers would appear, in all good company, like a ſavage tranſplanted into a civilized country, where he would affrighten every body he met, and every body he met would be affrighted at him.

Reſign it all to your ſiſter, if ſhe likes it, and her ridiculous aſſociates; who in their ſolitude are at leaſt ſeveral ages behind us. I can enter very well into her character, by the manner of the ball and entertainment you deſcribe. I'll hold a wager ſhe thought to divert you wonderfully. I'll anſwer for it, theſe people conceive they divert themſelves. As to M. de St. Sever, he is one of thoſe ſort of men who is pleaſed with any thing, becauſe they have not taſte enough to be diſpleaſed. An honeſt, downright, Marplot, always buſy for want of ſomething to do, or through a friendly zeal that is always in the wrong; in ſhort, he is a character truly

truly burlesque. I have seen Madam de St. Albin's daughters; mighty pretty puppets, truly! It is pity they are dumb. Not but that either might do well enough for a wife; and in that I should for once be of your sister's opinion, if you thought yourself old enough to marry. The woman whom it is the least necessary for us to think agreeable, is one's own wife. By marrying, we espouse the fortune of a woman, and set her person at liberty. This is what is generally esteemed a reputable way of observing that sacrament. Miss de St. Albin is a young lady of condition, rich, and may be made a wife of without any great inconvenience; but it should not be quite so soon. You have as yet got but one mistress; how can you have such a narrow notion of things as to take a wife. As to Leonora—But stay; what is it o'clock? Half an hour past seven. Adieu, my dear friend; I had an appointment at six; I proposed to be there at seven, and it will presently be eight. Yours till to-morrow.

LETTER XII.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Nov. 28.

ALAS! my dear friend, how can I forbear being alarmed. To ſee my brother expoſed to the moſt terrible dangers, and dare not to ſpeak to him! How difficult is it to be ſilent. Into what a labyrinth can he have ſtray'd? If friendly and virtuous counſel is become dangerous, where is our reſource? My huſband, who is not ſo much alarmed as I am, ſays he will undertake to cure my brother. He is acquainted with that Mr. Roche you ſpeak of; and conceives he may be of ſervice to us in undeceiving the Marquis. Where doth M. Ferval obtain the information he gives you? Doubtleſs you know the young gentleman well, and that we run no riſque in placing confidence in him. Aſſure him of my utmoſt acknowledgment; reanimate his zeal, and engage him to continue his aſſiduity. Adieu, my dear friend, I depend entirely on you.

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LETTER XIII.

From Madam de Narton *to Madam* de Saint-Sever.

Paris, Nov. 30.

I Am ſenſible, my dear friend, how great is your diſquietude, and you know how much I muſt partake of it. You will not do well, however, to be too ſuſceptible of danger: the evil is not without remedy. The zeal of our friend Ferval needs nothing to reanimate it: he is a youth of great ſpirits and vivacity. His mother is my friend, and I have known him from his cradle. He appears greatly flattered by our confidence; and ſeems delighted at being uſeful to us, and at ſeeing that I hold his underſtanding and probity in ſo much eſteem, as to employ him in an affair of ſo delicate a nature. I can anſwer for him, that it engages his whole time and attention. Educated under the moſt tender and affectionate of mothers, his manners are pure, his ſentiments refined, and his heart warm as it is honeſt. His extreme vivacity, which might be miſtaken for giddineſs, does not prevent his having infinite addreſs, in coming at the minuteſt circumſtance of a thouſand private adventures. He

is in the ſecret of moſt intrigues about town, has a talent for diſcoveries, and is beſides connected with your brother; ſo that he will on no account be ſuſpected. It is by various little arts and means he hath diſcovered a ſure method of coming at the knowledge of every circumſtance it is important for us to know.

To this end, he hath, by ſome means or other, engaged Leonora's chamber-maid in his intereſt; who gave him, no longer ago than yeſterday, ſome freſh information. The Marquis, ſhe ſays, has told Leonora of your being deſirous he ſhould marry: ſince which piece of confidence placed in her, ſhe has redoubled her reſerve towards him; even ſo much as with difficulty to permit him to ſee her. Such is her management at preſent. It was one Mr. Valville, it ſeems a friend of your brother, that ſome time ago brought him acquainted with Leonora. It appears, that he began with the Marquis, by firſt urging him to keep a miſtreſs; aſſuring him it was by no means proper for ſuch a man as he to have no intrigue on his hands. On this notion, of the propriety of keeping a miſtreſs, the Marquis began to look out for one, and Valville ſo ordered it, that his choice fell on Leonora, of whom he himſelf had been an

admirer

admirer for above three years: a circumstance, however, which he thought proper to keep a secret from your brother.

It is this girl with which the Marquis hath fallen desperately in love; making her magnificent presents; which she receives with apparent reluctance and most artful address. In a word, my dear, he is quite intoxicated, absolutely delirious with his passion. I advise you of this, not to increase your apprehensions, but to shew you how necessary it will be to make use of artful and proper management to cure him of so absurd a passion. If you will be ruled by me, you will avoid speaking to him of any thing that relates to the affair. Be well upon your guard; your friendship may otherwise betray you into it. It is very essential that he should not suspect your knowing any thing of his intrigue; as it would serve at once to mortify and irritate him, both which are, in my opinion, equally dangerous. I should be very glad also that M. de St. Sever should leave the conduct of this affair entirely to us. Endeavour, my dear Countess, to prevent his speaking or acting in it, if possible. I know the warmth of his affection for you, and fear it may induce him to engage in this business with

more zeal than prudence. On ſuch delicate occaſions, the leaſt ſtep is of importance.

I know not whether you are acquainted with Valville; he is in high life, and hath adopted its modes and principles: he imagines himſelf irreproachable as a man of honour, and hath but very falſe notions of honour itſelf. He piques himſelf on a ſpecies of falſe virtue, which, with him, ſupplies the place of that real virtue he deſpiſes. He treats every thing as the effect of prejudice, and is himſelf governed by nothing but prejudices. He imagines himſelf to be a man of probity, and is only a man of figure: he entertains but a bad opinion of women; he appears, however, to reſpect them; eſteems none, but amuſes himſelf with all that come in his way. Love he conſiders as trifling; but out of decorum makes a point of friendſhip. Drinking he hates, but is fond of pleaſure, which he ſeldom attains. His taſte is delicate, his mind feeble, and his heart cold and indifferent. A ſlave to the extravagance of cuſtom, he treats the moſt frivolous things with great gravity, but has no idea of ſentiment or real tenderneſs.

There, my dear Counteſs, is a ſketch of the picture of your brother's friend. But let

not

not his portrait frighten you; this man may be of ſervice to us; his heart is not formed to treat love as a paſſion. He will oppoſe that of the Marquis only by ridicule; but he will oppoſe it very ſtrongly. The arguments of vice are more artful than thoſe of virtue, and his falſe precepts will make a deeper impreſſion than your principles of chaſtity and virtue. As Valville ſets up for the friend, the Mentor of the Marquis, and hath introduced him into the world, he will be juſtly afraid that the ridicule of this attachment would rebound on himſelf, if it were known; doubt not, therefore, his making uſe of all that ſuperiority, which ten years age and experience have given him, to recover your brother from thoſe dangerous connections in which he himſelf engaged him. Leonora is afraid of him, and would gladly ſeparate him from the Marquis: but ſhe is fearful as yet of giving ſuch an intimation, and your brother doth not perceive any thing of the matter. I ſay again it is extremely fortunate, under the preſent circumſtances, that your brother puts ſo much confidence in his friend Valville.

Such, my dear Counteſs, is a particular and exact account of the ſituation of affairs; be

be assured that my information will be very authentic, and that I shall not keep you ignorant of any thing. Adieu: keep up your spirits, and depend on the most sincere and affectionate of your friends.

LETTER XIV.

From the Marquis de Roselle *to* Valville.

Paris, Dec. 2.

AH! my dear Valville, you know but little of love. Excuse me when I tell you, that your letter really shocked me. Pray what is your idea of sentiment, if it is to be thus subjected to mere circumstance. How different is my heart from yours! I burn, I die for Leonora, and yet take a delight in my sufferings. I respect, I admire that virtue, which reduces me to this state of desperation. Shall I affect not to love her, because you think her an object unworthy of my esteem. Is it you, Valville, who gives me such counsel? How is it possible for me to pursue it? No: It is my love, my assiduity alone that can melt her heart. What a triumph! If you but overlook, my dear friend,

friend, the former conduct of this amiable girl, you will find, that her virtue, at present, is more impregnable than that of a woman, who never experienced the like seductions. She permitted me yesterday to pay her a visit. Heavens! What an admirable mixture of love, modesty, prudence, and beauty! One must have an heart of adamant not to be affected. I owe her the greatest obligations; her least favours are sacrifices; the sweetness and openness of her manner serve alone to soften the severity of her reserve: in a word, she is an adorable creature. Oh! my friend, in what a distressful situation is my poor heart. She has reduced me so low, as even to fear offending by asking any thing: My respect is equal to the ardour of my desires. I know not what will be the consequence of all this; but this I know, that to deprive me of hope would be to deprive me of life. You have refused to do me the service I desired of you; your friendship being your excuse prevents my complaining; I shall, therefore, take care of that business myself. But I beg of you to spare Leonora in your letters; you owe this, at least, to our friendship; and, in particular, forbear to speak to me of any other

other miſtreſs. Adieu, my dear Valville, and believe that my heart is open to none but you.

LETTER XV.

From M. de Valville *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Dec. 2.

I Both love and pity you, my dear Marquis; but I will never encourage your extravagant paſſion. For heaven's ſake, make nobody your confident but me; you will never be able to efface the ridicule ſuch an amour would bring upon you. You inſiſt on my not ſpeaking againſt the virtue of your miſtreſs: be it ſo; I will hold it in due reverence; I will even forget her paſt conduct, to oblige you. But, my good friend, were ſhe even the modeſteſt woman in the world, do you think I ſhould approve the nature of your attachment? Love is in you abſolute madneſs. Do you know that love ſhould be only an affair of amuſement, a preſervative againſt the ſpleen? One ought in his amours, as in all other affairs, to lay down a ſettled plan, and purſue it invariably, at leaſt if circumſtances do not change.

One

One takes ſuch a girl as Leonora into keeping, and maintains her handſomely, ſo long as ſhe proves agreeable and amuſes one: quitting her the moment one is tired of her company, or ſhe grows impertinent. There is nothing more in the matter. A little more reſpect, indeed, is to be paid to women of a certain rank; but it is ſeldom that perſons under my age are admitted there. A connection with theſe Ladies requires more art and affiduity. To inſinuate one's ſelf into the good opinion of a huſband, to make ſure of his ſervants, and to preſerve appearances, form a difficult taſk, which a knowlege of the world only can capacitate a man to perform. It was for this reaſon, I would not have you begin upon ſuch a ſcheme. Leonora was a proper object for you at firſt ſetting out; but your brain is actually turned. Recollect yourſelf, my dear Marquis, pray; you are abſolutely in a burning fever, which muſt be abated. With ſo great an inclination to merit deference, you ought to be particularly fearful of incurring ridicule. Only think of that which this adventure would bring upon you, were it publickly known. For my part, I will keep the ſecret;

cret; but don't go to expose yourself. Farewell, my dear Marquis, forgive my freedom as I forgive your weakness.

LETTER XVI.

From Madam de Narton *to the Countess.*

Paris, Dec. 20.

I Am extremely sorry, my dear friend, to be obliged to set out for Varennes, one of my estates in Lorraine, and to leave you in the midst of so much uneasiness. An unforeseen and unavoidable accident requires my immediate departure; nor do I very well know when it will be possible for me to return. The chagrin your brother's affairs must necessarily give you, increases my regret to leave you. Had I staid, I should have done every thing in my power to serve both him and you; my zeal for your service, however, will not be lessened by my absence; and, perhaps, may be more efficacious. It was not in my power to act in the affair myself; and Mr. Ferval, to whom I should have been obliged, will do us the same good offices as if I was present. I shall reside in the neighbourhood of his mother, who will join her influence

influence to engage her ſon to redouble his attention to the conduct of your brother. He has promiſed to write to me conſtantly; and I ſhall ſend you his letters, when they can be of any utility. Adieu, my dear Counteſs, I ſuffer extremely at the occaſion of my departure.

LETTER XVII.

From the Counteſs to Madam de Narton.

Paris, Dec. 25.

HOW unſeaſonable, my dear friend, is the cauſe of your abſence! So neceſſary is your company, tho' it were only to give me ſome conſolation. I have heard no more of my brother ſince your departure; for theſe four days paſt I know not even what is become of him. My huſband has been with M. de la Roche. I could not prevent his indulging his own inclination. Not that I ſee any ill conſequences that can ariſe from his viſit. He will himſelf give you an account of the particulars of it. I muſt confeſs, that my mind is not ſufficiently at liberty to enter into a recital of that nature. I am indeed ſo much aſtoniſhed at all

these circumstances, that I conceit myself, as it were, in another world. Forget me not, my dear friend, but transmit me some advice of my brother, as well as of yourself, as soon as possible.

LETTER XVIII.

From the Count de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Dec, 25.

I Reserved to myself, Madam, the pleasure of communicating to you the particulars of my visit to M. de la Roche. My wife takes the matter seriously enough for us both. Not that I think her fears altogether groundless. The arts of a pretty woman are too dangerous not to be feared: But I hope, that our Marquis hath not entirely lost his senses; and that nothing more is requisite, than to take off the bandage from his eyes to make him see clearly.

To this end, I have been to wait on M. de la Roche, who is an old acquaintance; one that I knew on his entrance into life. The recollection of his circumstances at that time might not have been extremely agreeable now;

now; I avoided, therefore, taking notice of any thing that might be offenſive; but aſſumed the familiar air of an old friend; which appeared to give him ſome pleaſure, as it was in the preſence of a young Duke, who doubtleſs came to borrow money of him. He ſeemed delighted, therefore, at the kind of relief which this interruption gave him. When his Grace was gone, I formed a pretext of buſineſs, to aſſign as a motive for my viſit. After this, I commended his houſe, his furniture, gardens, &c. all which he was officious to ſhew me. By theſe means, I got ſo much into his favour, that he aſked me what I had been doing for theſe twenty years paſt, that I had never ſeen him. On this I informed him of my marriage, and by degrees brought upon the carpet the ſituation of my brother-in-law; dwelling particularly on his connections with a ſinger of the opera. Why, ſaid he, it muſt be owned they are very pretty women; but they are coſtly; add to that—Nay, ſaid I, interrupting him, not that I think ſhe coſts him much. For I am aſſured ſhe is at the ſame time kept by a gentleman extremely rich, and of very good underſtanding, who loves

her to diſtraction, notwithſtanding ſhe thus impoſes on him.—Ho! ho! ho! the block-head! ſaid he, laughing, how is it poſſible he can be ſuch a dupe? And you are aſſured he is a man of ſenſe!—Indeed, I am told he has an infinite deal; and that it is which ſo much aſtoniſhes me. But who is this girl, ſaid he, with ſome vivacity.—I think her name is Leonora: Yes it is; it's Leonora.—At this my old acquaintance coloured up to the eyes, and after being a minute or two ſilent, replied coldly, he did not know her. I inſiſted much on the misfortune of the gallant, who was thus deceived; concluding he muſt be ſome very worthy perſon; and deſcribing the happineſs of the Marquis in terms ſo mortifying to him, that at length I effected my deſign. For, either out of weakneſs or vexation, he confeſſed to me the whole of the affair. I, ſaid he, am that unfortunate wretch; but I well know how to do myſelf juſtice. At my age, it is neceſſary one ſhould be generous; for which reaſon I have been ſo. I allowed her no leſs than fifteen hundred livres a month; I preſented her with all the furniture of her houſe, beſides forty thouſand livres worth of jewels. I required of her only

only to be faithful to me, and keep my amour a ſecret. My wife is old and very devout; I have children thirty years of age, and two ſons-in-law of diſtinction, who build much on my care to improve my fortune. I have beſides to do with a man, whoſe ſeverity of manners would by no means approve ſuch amuſements. All this obliges me to be diſcreet, and I flattered myſelf the world was ignorant of my weakneſs. The impudent ſtrumpet! I ſee ſhe hath made uſe of my very precaution to deceive me. I have not been able to obtain a ſight of her above twice for this month paſt: The reaſon ſhe gave for requiring my abſence was, that I was watched by ſome of my family. You are a man of gallantry, ſir, continued he; you know the world; I therefore do not repent truſting you with my ſecret. But what ſteps can I take in this affair? I am ſo extremely enraged, I waſh my hands, for the future, of all intrigues with ſuch infamous wretches: But I will be revenged. I will have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing that abominable impoſtor plunged again into that poverty, from which my weakneſs hath raiſed her. I have had her but a twelvemonth; and only think

what an immenſe ſum ſhe has coſt me. By heavens, I will never forgive her. A torrent of abuſive appellations ſucceeded this laſt reflection; you may be ſure I encouraged him to avenge himſelf; pitying, embracing him, and promiſing to keep his ſecret inviolably: After which we parted the beſt friends in the world; his diſpoſition being juſt ſuch as I could wiſh to have it. Thus have I ſtirred up one vice to puniſh another; from which I think nothing but good conſequences can poſſibly happen. You ſee, Madam, this affair wears a promiſing aſpect. Your moſt ſincere and reſpectable ſervant. Adieu.

LETTER XIX.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Dec. 28.

YOU need not, my dear Marquis, be generous, in order to render yourſelf amiable. Take back, I conjure you, take back your preſents; they are too magnificent. You will not ſuſpect me of ingratitude; but do not appear, by ſuch gifts, to ſuſpect me of an avarice too contemptible to find a

place

place in my heart. Alas! you judge of my ſentiments by thoſe of others of my profeſſion. Cruel prejudice! from which virtue only can defend me! But ought not your eſteem alſo to be my advocate? I have returned you the caſket you left yeſterday on my toilette; and beg of you to receive it again, and be aſſured my acknowledgments are equal to your generoſity.

LETTER XX.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, Dec. 14.

NAY, this is too much—refuſe even to accept my preſents! This is to add to my unhappineſs a degree of contempt that is inſupportable. I will not receive it again.—You hate me Leonora, I ſee; I feel you hate me. In the name of love, do not, do not thus drive me to deſperation. Accept at leaſt theſe feeble tokens of my tenderneſs, my dear, too virtuous girl; do you, in turn, render me the juſtice that is my due. Think, alas! that theſe preſents, which I make you with ſo much pleaſure, are the only conſola-

tion I have. Grudge me not this relief in my affliction. I ſuſpect thee of avarice! Oh, Leonora! is it poſſible you can form ſo wrong a judgment of a heart that is all yours; which beats only for thee. If you ſhould be ſo cruel as to return me the caſket again—Oh! beware of reducing me actually to deſpair.

LETTER XXI.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Nov. 14.

AS you ſo peremptorily inſiſt on it, my dear Marquis, I ſubmit, and accept of your ſuperb preſent. Permit me, however, to conceal the uſe I intend to make of it, and to keep only the ring. In granting this you will make me happy, as I ſhall have it in my power to do ſome good.

LETTER XXII.

From Valville *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Dec. 17.

WHAT is become of you, my dear Marquis, that I have heard no news of you for this week paſt? Have you not ſhewn my letters to your miſtreſs? If you have actually carried your weakneſs ſo far, I am no longer aſtoniſhed at your ſilence. A word with you, my friend; this is paſt a jeſt; it is, faith; and I do very ſeriouſly aſſure you, that you are going to ruin yourſelf. When this fooliſh fancy goes off, you will be ready to hang yourſelf. You will afford a perpetual ſubject for ſquibs and epigrams. Notices of this ſort are diſagreeable. If your miſtreſs were really a Veſtal, you might poſſibly find ſome few votaries of Aſtrea among the vulgar, who would admire your conduct; but the dupe of Leonora would not even excite pity. One can never find you at home. Pray come and ſee me to-morrow. We muſt really give your manners a turn. I have a deſign to introduce you to the young Marchioneſs d'Aſterre;

it will be a neceſſary and agreeable diverſion. The manners, the *bon ton* of good company, the being accuſtomed to ſee it, and the compariſons you will thence be able to make, will ſoon open your eyes. Adieu, dear Marquis, you will come to-morrow.

LETTER XXIII.

From the Marquis to Valville.

Paris, Dec. 18.

YOU cannot imagine, Valville, how much you offend me. You do not reflect how much uneaſineſs it muſt give a lover, to ſee the object of his paſſion inſulted. It requires all the friendſhip I have for you to plead your excuſe. I have never before known you unjuſt. What has Leonora done to you, that you condemn her ſo readily? Her ſituation in life, I own, is deſpicable; but is it the effect of her choice? May not the unavoidable conſequence of her profeſſion, the temptations it expoſes her to, the follies and even the vices ſhe has fallen into, be excuſed by the misfortune of her circumſtances, by the abandoned ſtate of her

her education? May they not be effaced by that virtue, of which her heart is now replete? For my own part, that noble frankneſs, that ingenuous ſincerity, with which ſhe makes the moſt humiliating confeſſions, are ſufficient to make me forget every thing. Oh, my dear Valville! did you but know her ſoul! Did you but know the uſe to which ſhe has put the preſents I have made her! She has ſold the diamonds I gave her, and has given the money to ſupport an honeſt, diſtreſſed family of her acquaintance. She would have concealed it, indeed, from me: But when I happened to be with her yeſterday, the poor unfortunates, whom ſhe had relieved, came to throw themſelves at her feet, and bathe them with their tears; expreſſing their gratitude, notwithſtanding her injunctions to the contrary, in the moſt affecting terms. Such, Valville, ſuch is the object of my attachment: Do you conceive then I can be aſhamed of her. I ſhould be mean, indeed, not to dare to love virtue for its own ſake. Adieu, my friend, believe me I am unhappy enough without your reproaches. I can by no means accept your offer of introducing me to your young Marchioneſs.

chioneſs. In what, pray, does your pretended *bon ton* give her the ſuperiority to Leonora? I deſire no diſſipation to make me forget my ſufferings. I take a pleaſure in them, and it is only Leonora that can remove them.

LETTER XXIV.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Dec. 26.

ALAS! my dear Marquis! all is over between us. See me no more, nor inſiſt on my ſeeing you. The horrid ſituation into which I am reduced by the cruelty of a baſe and barbarous man, leaves me no other reſource than immediate death. That wretch, whom I have unfortunately known from my infancy, that hypocrite, that vile ſeducer, that La Roche, of whoſe extravagant behaviour you poſſibly have already heard; that monſter, who, under the pretence of piety, and of a deſire to reform me, by the means of opulence and even of religion, hath cauſed me to accept of his favours—Oh! I ſhall never live long enough to be ſufficiently aſhamed of it. His inten-

intentions, after all, were criminal; I have perceived it, indeed, for ſome time; but I was almoſt afraid to perceive it; his aſſiſtance was neceſſary, and it was by degrees that he proceeded, at length, to demand the infamous reward of his favours. My hatred, virtue, what ſhall I ſay, perhaps my love; all theſe united, prevailed over my fear of indigence, and induced me to reject with diſdain his horrid propoſals. The rage which this refuſal excited, in his mean and cruel ſoul, ſoon baniſhed his affection. He knew that you was attached to me; which inflaming his jealouſy, he committed the moſt violent outrages; turning me ignominiouſly out of the apartments I lived in, carrying off all my jewels, and, in ſhort, ſtripping me of every thing.

The loſs, indeed, however conſiderable, gives me no regret, as every thing belonging to ſuch a monſter is odious to me: But the inſult thus put on me is ſo public, that my heart bleeds under the cruelty of the mortification. Alas! even the ſhadow of reputation, which I flattered myſelf to have preſerved, is taken from me. Adieu, my dear, and too affectionate Marquis; pity an unhappy victim to the ſeverity of fortune; but ſee her no more. If I have merited

merited of you any ſhare of eſteem, condeſcend to retain ſo precious a memorial of me, and I ſhall die content.

LETTER XXV.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, Dec. 26.

HEAVENS! my dear Leonora, what is it you tell me! Doſt thou talk of deſpair and dying?—I fly to your relief. Amazing inſolence! Why did not you inform me—But it is no time for reflections. The monſter ſhall not eſcape my vengeance. —In the name of love, let not my deareſt, my divine Leonora, be caſt down. The inſults of that abominable wretch are encomiums on thy virtue; and will ſupply the place of reputation. In two hours, at fartheſt, I will be with you; mean while I ſhall hold my time extremely precious. Compoſe yourſelf, dear girl; never did I experience before ſo much love and reſentment.

LETTER XXVI.

From M. de Ferval *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Jan. 2.

I Stand in no need of encouragement, Madam. I will ſerve the Marquis de Roſelle with all my heart; but his paſſion is ſo violent that it really terrifies me. The noiſe which M. de la Roche has made about Leonora, has only ſerved to inflame him the more. In conſequence of this, he has placed her in magnificent apartments, which he has furniſhed for her moſt ſuperbly; he has preſented her with the richeſt cloaths and jewels; has bought her a chariot, hired her ſervants, and has ſettled on her even a larger penſion than that ſhe had of la Roche. To effect all this, he hath ſold his eſtate in Picardy; and hath, in ſo doing, had a quarrel with his brother-in-law, St. Sever. Poor la Roche is obliged to ſecrete himſelf for fear of being run through the body; which the Marquis threatened. Such, Madam, have been the events of the laſt four days. M. de St. Sever hath ſadly diſconcerted our ſchemes. Endeavour, I beg of you, to prevent

prevent his interfering any more. I have not loſt all hope if I am but permitted to act alone. My valet-de-chambre (for ſuch are the ſprings I am obliged to ſet to work) keeps up a conſtant correſpondence with Leonora's woman: It is by theſe means I hope to compaſs my end. I ſhould think myſelf extremely happy to ſucceed, and to convince you of the greatneſs of my reſpect, by the fervency of my zeal.

LETTER XXVII.

From the Counteſs de St. Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Jan. 6.

HOW terribly, my dear friend, am I chagrined. You have heard what effect the reſentment of M. de la Roche hath produced. My brother came here yeſterday; when I could not prevent my huſband's ſpeaking to him of the ſale of his eſtate, and giving his opinion, perhaps with too much warmth, about his conduct. He mentioned nothing, however, of Leonora; he promiſed me he would

would not; but insisted much on the absurdity and extravagance of his general expences. The Marquis would have gone off almost without giving him an answer; but M. de St. Sever stopt him, and continued to make him such remonstrances, as the Marquis had no mind to hear. He could not detain him long, however: This brother, whom I have always found so mild of temper, so affectionate to me, and complacent to my husband, became all at once bold and peremptory, nay, almost insolent. I stand in no need, said he, of a preceptor, nor hath any one a right to controul my actions. Reproof is not the part of a friend. On this he went out in a passion, nor durst I ask him to return. The Count was too much heated as well as the Marquis. It is possible we shall see him no more. What subjects of affliction are these! My husband is incensed against him beyond measure: Adieu, my dear friend, my distresses seem every day to increase.

LETTER XXVIII.

From Madam de Narton *to the Countefs* de Saint-Sever.

Varennes, Jan. 9.

YOUR diftrefs is juft and natural, my dear Countefs: But what relief is it at prefent that I partake it with you! I am now, alas! at too great a diftance to give you confolation and dry up your tears. I hope, however, that the ill fuccefs of your hufband's fcheme will, for the future, render him more circumfpect. Ufe all the influence you have over him, my dear, to engage him to fuppefs both his zeal and his refentment. Indeed, how can one be really angry at an unhappy youth, under the tyranny of the moft violent of all paffions. It is no longer himfelf who thinks, acts, or fpeaks. Let us treat him as a fick perfon in the delirium of a fever; or as one of thofe unfortunate madmen, whom nature frequently prefents to us, as mortifying fpectacles of humanity. Your brother is nearly in as terrible a fituation. But he will be extricated; and then his repentance will expiate thofe offences of which he is at prefent inconfcious.

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To effect this desirable end, it will require very artful management. Let M. de St. Sever content himself with consoling you under your afflictions. Let him interest himself, as much as he pleases, in your brother's reformation; but pray tell him, that I conjure him to trust M. de Ferval with the whole business of bringing it about. Tell him I foresaw the consequence of a step he took, as soon as I read his relation of it. We must not attempt to snatch out precipitately the dart, with which your brother's heart is transfixed; but must endeavour to loosen it, and extract it by degrees. We must oppose art to cunning. An error in the heart is much more difficult to eradicate, with virtuous minds, than an error in the understanding. This is not an irregularity; it is a weakness. Ferval will employ all the means in his power to serve you. The connection which one of his people hath formed with Leonora's chamber-maid, brings him acquainted with a number of little circumstances, and enables him to take his measures accordingly. I doubt not of your often seeing him. Not that he hath made me a confident in his designs; nor perhaps will he make you: He

knows how dangerous it is to make confidents in general, and therefore will absolutely make none. Let him alone. His mother gives him all encouragement, as if his assiduity might still be increased. Her letters to him are full only of you, the Marquis, and his unhappy adventure. She and her family are my only company here, and I have no need of any other.

I had not seen her for many years before my arrival: but I found her understanding, her virtues, her character, the same as when I left her. What I could not be acquainted with before, however, are her three daughters; the one eighteen, the other sixteen, and the third fifteen years of age. Imagine to yourself three nymphs, as accomplished and agreeable as you please, provided they are the most amiable I have ever seen. Young as they are, they have nothing of youth about them but its innocence and beauty. They have sense; but their sense is charming, simple as their hearts, and such as would give you an idea of nature truly refined. If I were writing a romance, I could not forbear comparing the dawn of their understandings to the mild and gentle rays of

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the rising sun. Such, my dear friend, are my companions, with whom I could be extremely happy, if the distressful circumstances, in which I left my dear Countess, would permit me to amuse myself agreeably. The Marquis, I am certain, cannot be wanting in his affection for you. If he should shew, therefore, any desire to see you again, any regret at having given you uneasiness, embrace that opportunity of displaying to him all the tenderness of your affection for him. You should repeat every testimony of your regard, and, above all, take heed to avoid explanations or reproaches; to shun every thing that may tend to mortify him, or touch upon his passion. Adieu, my amiable friend; how much do I suffer in being thus absent from you!

LETTER XXIX.

From Leonora *to the Marquis,*

Paris, Dec. 28.

ALTHOUGH you have given me your word, my dear Marquis, that you will not see that abominable La Roche, I can hardly be quite satisfied. Forget, if possible,

the very name of the wretch, I conjure you. He is by no means worth your resentment. For my part, I despise him too much even to wish to be revenged. Promise me that you will never see him. Indeed, I am afraid of him. He has one of the basest of souls. A man of honour can never be on his guard against the designs of a villain.—I tremble at the very thought. My dear Marquis, forgive my fears. Do me the favour also, to set some bounds to your generosity. I am not formed to become such magnificence. No; it only serves to give me mortification. Is this the appearance of virtue? Permit me to accept of no more presents. I should be extremely unhappy if I were the cause of a rupture between you and the Countess your sister. She must doubtless have heard of your attachment to me; have known the expences I have occasioned you; a circumstance that cannot fail to involve such an affectionate and worthy sister in the utmost affliction. With regard to myself, it is impossible any thing should interest her in my favour. My condition alone is sufficient to render me odious. The Count her husband is a simple, honest man, who loves you sincerely; his

his age, and the care he hath taken of you, give him ſome right to look into your affairs. He is perſuaded that you are going to ruin yourſelf on my account; and endeavours to prevent you. How can you blame him? Add to this, that his intention of getting you well married, is extremely reaſonable, and your attachment to me an obſtacle to his deſigns. I am too much your friend, and am under too many obligations to you, not to put you in mind of all theſe circumſtances. Indeed, what other motive can I have for keeping my dear Marquis at a diſtance? Let us both equally avoid the progreſs of a dangerous amour. Let us confine ourſelves within the bounds of friendſhip; its pleaſures may be leſs delightful, but their conſequences will be leſs painful. Let us ſee each other but ſeldom, I beg of you. Seek a relief againſt your paſſion among your own relations. Attach yourſelf, agreeably to their wiſhes, to ſome amiable and virtuous object, worthy of your love; and if the future happineſs of your life require it, be Leonora entirely forgotten. Adieu, my dear Marquis, be thou but happy, and my utmoſt wiſhes are accompliſhed.

LETTER XXX.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, Dec. 28.

MY divine, my adorable girl! what pleasure you give me! Forget thee! Can I wish to forget my Leonora? No, I would rather die a thousand deaths. What is it to me that my relations are desirous of subjecting me to the disagreeable yoke of marriage? I will not be made a sacrifice to their intentions. I renounce matrimony for ever. I desire only thee; thee, my Leonora, whose delightful image entirely possesses my heart. What scruples do you raise against receiving my presents? I have before desired of you, not to deny me this gratification, the only one permitted me; and let my relations dispute that point with me. I have promised you I will not see La Roche. I should never stain my sword with the blood of so base a scoundrel, unless in the first transports of my resentment. Be under no apprehensions about him. How great, how noble are your sentiments! You merit the homage of the universe! I have read your letter over a thousand

ſand times, but it is only to admire your ſentiments, without adopting them, and to convert your virtues into arms againſt yourſelf.

LETTER XXXI.

From Valville *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Jan. 8.

I Abhor the part of a cenſor: but I cannot help, my dear friend, taking upon myſelf that office with regard to thee. Thy folly is become public, and the ridicule of it rebounds upon me. Thou haſt advertiſed; poſted thyſelf; ſold thy eſtates; quarrelled with thy relations; in a word, I muſt tell thee, thou haſt broken through all the rules of common ſenſe and decorum.

It is not neceſſary, indeed, to love one's relations; but one ſhould behave decently to them; ſee them ſeldom; but ſtill ſee them. To come to an open rupture is imprudent; it is to be wanting to one's ſelf. It is abſurd to deny one's ſelf the pleaſures of gallantry; but one ought to preſerve external appearances. We do not take the trouble, now-a-days, to be hypocrites; but we ob-

ſerve a decorum. You ſtand upon nothing, but give headlong into the moſt abſurd and ridiculous paſſion that can be conceived. You ſuffer yourſelf to be deceived by a falſe pretence to virtue. What an extravagance! Were even her pretenſions real, a man muſt be a dupe, indeed, to attach himſelf ſeriouſly to a woman who advertiſes herſelf. To what doth it tend? But, as to the virtue which Leonora diſplays to faſcinate you, it is the falſeſt of all poſſible falſhoods.

Since it is that which hath ſeduced you, I will ſend, if it be neceſſary, to cure you of this frenzy, a liſt of your predeceſſors: It is at leaſt a numerous one.—Believe me, my dear Marquis, I know Leonora better than you. You are the firſt and the only one to whom ſhe ever proved unkind. Her pretended franknefs, with which you are ſo taken, is only a refined piece of impoſture. However ingenuous are her confeſſions, depend on it ſhe does not confeſs all. But is it poſſible that it ſhould be neceſſary to convince you by facts, what has been the conduct of an opera girl? Her profeſſion alone is ſufficient to condemn her, and her artifices are all too groſs.

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As I now never ſee you, I have thus taken the liberty to write, and to inform you, that you are become an univerſal ſubject of ridicule; which is the greateſt misfortune that can happen to a man of your age. Indulge yourſelf in your pleaſures; keep a miſtreſs or two; avoid the lectures of your ſiſter, and the idle remonſtrances of your brother-in-law: In all this you will do well; but obſerve ſome decorum in the eyes of the world, which will no longer admit of any palliation of your faults. Quit Leonora without heſitation, and we will endeavour to make up all the reſt. Adieu.

LETTER XXXII.

From the Marquis to Valville.

Paris, Jan. 9.

THIS is too much, ſir. You carry the matter too far. To add calumny to your abuſe. — You know not what love is; but I thought you had ſome regard to the ties of friendſhip. Your heart is not formed for thoſe affectionate ſentiments, which I expect

pect to find in my friends. It is that title only which has given you a privilege to trouble me with superfluous advice and impertinent informations. You will be pleased, for the future, to suppress them. Forget me.

LETTER XXXIII.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

FORGIVE, my Leonora, forgive the effects of an emotion, which it is not in my power to suppress. I dare not avow it.—Thou wert not formed to be suspected; so that my curiosity cannot arise from jealousy; no, it takes its rise from the most affectionate, the most interesting motives. Oh! my lovely girl, may I venture, without temerity, to beg you would inform me of the contents of that letter you received yesterday at your toilette. I saw it caused an emotion, which in vain you endeavoured to conceal. You let it fall to the ground, and I observed your uneasiness while I stooped to pick it up. I only looked upon the outside, and was going to give it you, when you snatched it precipitately out of my hand. If it brought

you

you news of any unhappy event, you will not have the cruelty to keep me ignorant of it. If it bring the motives for any uneasiness, have you any that I ought not to partake of? Thou knowest, my dear girl, that my heart is open to every thing that concerns thee. Condescend to trust it with your anxieties.

I observed you yesterday, pensive, absent, and musing: You would every now and then fetch a sigh, and look stedfastly at me. —I cannot forbear thinking, that I am somehow interested in that letter. I durst not betray the eager desire I had to see it; but it has disturbed me ever since. I conjure you, therefore, if the contents relate only to yourself, or consist in secrets entrusted to you alone, I conjure you to let me know them.—I am too affectionate, my dear Leonora, to appear indiscreet or suspicious; I address myself only to you to know what it is you were fearful of acquainting me with. Adieu. If you have any regard for me, you will not refuse me this proof of your confidence.

LET-

LETTER XXXIV.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Jan. 21.

IT is impoſſible for you, my dear Marquis, to ſee the letter in queſtion. Honour forbids me to ſhew it you. The ſecrets of another are not, in any caſe, in my own power. I beg you will preſs me no farther on this head, as it is an affair of importance. You muſt not know it: be not, however, uneaſy; it is no misfortune; nay, if circumſtances were otherwiſe than they are, it would perhaps be a fortunate event for me. This is all that prudence, honour, and even gratitude permit me to ſay on the ſubject. Adieu, my dear Marquis; you cannot, without great injuſtice, cenſure my reſerve in this particular.

LETTER XXXV.

From M. de Ferval *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Jan. 25.

I Have gained but little ground, Madam, for the laſt fortnight; I obtained, however,

ever, yesterday, by means of my valet, an interview with Mrs. Martha, Leonora's waiting-maid. I shall endeavour to give you, as near as I can, the substance of our conversation; with all that expletive loquacity which is inseparable from the conversation of an Abigail.

Mrs. Martha began her discourse, very properly, with protestations of her uncorruptible fidelity to her mistress; assuring me that, with regard to herself, she was very different from most persons in her situation, being a woman of honour and principle. This preamble I knew by heart, as a matter of course; I was obliged, however, to listen, and made a reply to it, by slipping a few pieces of gold into her hand. I could perceive she was pleased with this kind of answer, though she made some shew of reluctance to receive them. I find, Sir, says she, you are a very honest Gentleman, and that it is only from a good motive you are desirous of knowing. — True, said I, let me know all that passes, and depend on it, you will have no reason to repent it. To be sure, Sir, replied she, I belong to the person of whom I get my bread; and if you, Sir,

Sir, have that charity, I shall certainly serve you. Having thus adjusted the matter with regard to her honour, her conscience, and her interest, she proceeded to inform me, that her mistress was very discreet, and had never trusted her with any of her designs. I have, indeed, some suspicions, continued she, but I cannot say any thing positively. On this I asked her, what might be her suspicions? — Why, I surmise, says she, that is, not that I know of a certain — but — certain it is, that she must have some designs upon the Marquis; for she is visited by nobody else. Before the last disturbance, she now and then saw M. de la Roche; for which reason she received the Marquis only at certain hours at which she appointed him; but since her breach with La Roche, we see no gentleman but the Marquis. It is very true that she earnestly desired him not to make her any more presents. At first, indeed, she received them with pleasure; but I know very well, that when he sent her a magnificent present the other day, she was really very angry. I gather from some hints she has given me, that she intends to quit the stage. She talks a deal of virtue, of decorum,

torum, and I know not what. In ſhort, Sir, there muſt be ſomething beneath all this; for, though I know but little, yet I know that black is not ſo eaſily turned white. Well, but, my good Martha, is it poſſible ſhe can be without a confident? Nay, nay, replied ſhe, I don't ſay that. There is Miſs Juliet—Yes—Miſs Juliet very probably knows what's going forward.—Who is this Miſs Juliet? ſaid I.—Why, Sir, you muſt know, ſhe is a young lady that—that—What ſhall I ſay?---A young lady, Sir, like my miſtreſs. She is at preſent about fifty miles out of town, at the country-houſe of a very rich gentleman, with whom ſhe is in keeping. She is my miſtreſs's moſt intimate friend, and often writes to her. Nay, I know nobody elſe that does write to her; which makes me ſo much the more curious to know from whom my miſtreſs received a letter about three days ago, directed in a different hand-writing. I would give a good deal to know the contents of that letter, for I am ſure it was not written nor received but with ſome particular deſign. Nothing has been ſaid to me about it; but I am certain there is ſomething I can't find out at the bottom.

My

My miſtreſs engaged the Marquis to be with her about noon, an hour ſhe never received him at before; being the time the poſt-man uſually delivers the letters. He uſed always to deliver them to me; but I had orders in the morning to ſend him up to my miſtreſs. Now it happened accordingly that he actually came to the door while the Marquis was with her, and delivered the letter into her own hands, when ſhe opened and read it with a great many affected airs of concern and importance. After ſhe had read it, ſhe let it fall, as it were accidentally, to the ground; and ſnatched it eagerly out of the the Marquis's hand, as he was picking it up. You ſee, Sir, there muſt be ſomething in all this.—That ſhe expected that letter, is very certain; what there was in it I know not; but there is ſome ſcheme in it I am poſitive. To-day I found her writing-deſk half open; upon which I locked it and carried her the key: for which ſhe reprimanded me for not minding my own buſineſs. But I was no ſooner out of the room, than ſhe cautiouſly opened it again. I watched her, without her ſeeing me, and am ſure it was done with ſome deſign. Well, ſaid I, and

how

how ſtands your miſtreſs with the Marquis at preſent?—Oh! Sir, he perfectly adores her, and I really believe, God forgive me, that he has a true *eſteem* for her: For ſo I think they call it, when a gentleman puts on ſuch an air of timidity and baſhfulneſs. He could not pay more reſpect to a Dutcheſs; nor could a Dutcheſs have more the air and manner of a modeſt woman than Madam Leonora, when the Marquis is with her. I have not been long in her ſervice; her former waiting-maid was diſmiſſed, poſſibly becauſe ſhe knew too much of what was what.—And pray, ſaid I, what is the general character and diſpoſition of your miſtreſs?—Oh! Sir, replied this communicative Abigail, ſhe is far from being ill-natured. Her place is eaſy enough, as to that matter; and when ſhe has money ſhe is very liberal: She neither haggles nor beats down any body's price; that I muſt ſay for her. They ſay too that ſhe has a great deal of wit; but of that I know nothing, as ſhe very ſeldom talks with me. She has been, for ſome time paſt, much in her reveries, appearing greatly anxious and diſturbed, particularly when ſhe is alone; but in the company of the Marquis ſhe puts on always an air of chearful-

neſs and gaiety. — Well, but Mrs. Martha, don't you think ſhe grants him the *favour?* — Oh, no, Sir, by no means, I am very certain of that. And, indeed, without that — I underſtand the way of theſe ladies, Sir, very well; I have ſerved ſeveral of them; and, indeed, for the matter of that, their money is as good to a poor body as another's. I take care to keep myſelf honeſt, Sir, and that's ſufficient for me. To be ſure I do really love Madam Leonora; ſhe is my miſtreſs, and ſo far I know my duty. Nor ſhould I ſay as much as I have done to any body but your Honour: But as you have aſſured me — And I ſee it is only with a good intention — Beſides, you will take care I ſhall come to no harm in the affair. — Yes, reſt ſatisfied, Mrs. Martha, about that.

Her tale ſeeming now to be nearly run down, I was obliged to wind her up again by a freſh proof of my generoſity; after which ſhe proceeded with new ſpirits, to inform me, that the Marquis ſent Leonora, a few days ſince, a magnificent preſent of jewels; which ſhe at firſt refuſed, and was with difficulty prevailed on, by his reiterated intreaties, to accept. That, after having ſold as many of them as brought her ſix thouſand

livres,

livres, ſhe ſent for ſome poor people of her acquaintance, among whom ſhe diſtributed, by way of charity, an hundred crowns; as they privately informed Martha. Theſe miſerable objects came the next day, while the Marquis was with her, to expreſs their acknowledgment; which they did, with ſuch extravagant encomiums on her goodneſs and generoſity, that the Marquis was fully perſuaded ſhe had given them the whole.

Leonora affected to be very uneaſy at their coming ſo unſeaſonably, though it appears that ſhe appointed them, and played off all the airs of generoſity and modeſty; compleating her deſign of giving the Marquis an high idea of the beauties of her mind. She hath alſo given the ſame people ten louis ſince, in order to keep them at her devotion; artfully taking care not to ſpecify the particular ſum ſhe has given them; ſo that it is only their appearance of unbounded gratitude that hath exaggerated the charity. And hence it is, that we can make no uſe of this adventure.

It ſerves nevertheleſs to ſhew the artful character of the woman we have to do with. This, Madam, is all I can arrive at the knowledge of, at preſent. I have a

ſtrong inclination to ſee this Miſs Juliet; and will immediately inform myſelf farther about her. I want alſo to penetrate the ſecret of the letter; for I ſhall acquaint you with every thing. Pray keep all this a ſecret, however, from the Counteſs. You know her huſband, who is ſtill very angry; and ſays, if every body had acted as he has done, the Marquis would not have given his family ſo much uneaſineſs. His ſiſter, he ſays, has ſpoiled him, and therefore he gives him up; he will have nothing more to do with his affairs. But I know he would be meddling again to-morrow if he could, and ſo much the worſe if he did.

The Counteſs will hardly keep what ſhe knows altogether a ſecret from him; it were prudent, therefore, to let her know nothing of the matter. Let me beg of you to keep her ignorant, at leaſt for the preſent. Adieu, Madam, pleaſe to let my mother and ſiſter take part with you in the aſſurances of my tendereſt reſpect.

LETTER XXXVI.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, Jan. 18.

HOW shall I confess my fault, my dear Leonora! But, how can I suppress the emotions which that letter — Your writing-desk stood half open;—I was alone in the room, the superscription I knew, and could not refrain from reading — Forgive me, dear Leonora! but your reserve increased my curiosity. Judge, if thou canst, of my apprehensions, and my fears—Will you accept the offer? The answer you gave me yesterday, encourages me to think you will not.—But, good God! what a trial! If you do not love me to excess, I am undone! Assure me of your refusal—But, shall I prevent your happiness? Shall I oppose your making your fortune? Yet, can I consent to lose you? I am in a state of desperation — There, take back the fatal letter. Fatal, do I say? Ought such an instance of the perfect homage paid to virtue, to be called fatal? Alas! Leonora, I know not what I say, what I wish, nor what I fear. My present agitation rends my heart, my situation is truly deplorable. Tell me, pray tell me, who is

this heroic, this virtuous, this worthy man, who thus offers you his hand. Happy man! that he can dispose of it at his pleasure.

LETTER XXXVII.

Found in Leonora's *Writing-Desk.*

Tours, Jan. 11.

THE contempt, Madam, with which you returned my passion, after having deprived me of all kind of hope, hath at length undeceived me. I thought myself affectionate; but I was cruel, I was unjust; and you banished me deservedly your presence. How heavily hath the time passed away for these twelve months past, that I have endured your absence, in this melancholy retreat! Believe me, I have sufficiently expiated the crime of not having done justice to your prudence. Blind as I was, I did not see into the cause of your refusal. I took it for the effect of caprice, or of hatred: I did not think I was insulting you. Shall I confess the truth, Madam! Your situation in life, and the prejudices attending it, would not permit me to entertain the least idea of your being virtuous. Your beauty had captivated me, my desires

desires were ardent; and I would readily have sacrificed to you my whole fortune; but nothing more. But what a sacrifice would that have been to you! I have been since, Madam, attentive to your conduct, which hath so far confirmed my regard and repentance, that I shall think myself happy, if you can forgive those involuntary offences which I now blush to recollect. I am now sensible of that admirable motive on which you acted; and the shocking idea of being odious to you, torments me no longer. My manners are also reformed; it is no longer a base seducer, who offers himself to your regard; but an honest man, more sensible even of your virtues than your charms, who conjures you to accept, with his hand, an homage more worthy, and the only one he can render to you. Yes, Madam, such is the united effect of my passion and your virtues. My resolution is taken. I can dispose of my hand as I please; I despise the prepossessions of the world: I would be happy, and cannot be so without you. My reputation will be too dearly preserved, if it must be made an obstacle to my happiness. My fortune, considerable as it is, is but an additional motive for my con-

ſulting only my own inclination. Conſult only yours, Madam, to confirm my happineſs, and my deſtiny will be juſtly to be envied.

D'ALBEVILLE.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Jan. 24.

YOU have been eſſentially deficient, Sir, not only to love, but to good-manners. I refuſed to entruſt you with a ſecret, the ſecret of a third perſon, and you have robbed me of it, in a manner moſt unworthy of you. Ah! Where is virtue? Where is ſincere affection, if not to be found in the hearts of thoſe, who know ſo well how to ſpeak its language? I do not deſire to be made acquainted with your motives for ſuch an action; they are perhaps too injurious to me, and I had rather you alone ſhould have occaſion to bluſh for them.

It was, doubtleſs, an act of imprudence in me, to leave my writing-deſk open; but it ought not to have been ſuch with regard to you. Precautions are not taken to ſecure us from the good and worthy; our ſecurity lies in their very probity itſelf. And yet not even

Love,

Love, whose first law enjoins us to respect the object beloved, could restrain your hand. I see nothing in this action of the Marquis de Roselle; you are no longer the person who inspired me with the purest of sentiments. — If I thought — But, no, I cannot think it. — I see even you have your intervals of weakness. — I know not why I find myself disposed to forgive you. Perhaps my self-love is flattered, at seeming to you worthy of some esteem. Perhaps it is this circumstance that will open to you my heart. As you have taken my secret from me, I will not conceal from you my resolutions. You doubtless have some remorse, but I will not reproach you. To make you easy, I will own I forgive you, and will endeavour to give you some further assurance on this subject.

The idea which I have formed of marriage, is that of an obligation too refined and sacred to be made a mere matter of bargain and sale. My present situation, it is true, is contemptible, my family obscure, and indigence is terrible. The offer which has been made me, would have set me above the world, above either want or contempt: but not even this consideration can ever engage me to

avow

avow an affection I do not, nor ever can, feel. A ſenſe of probity hath ſtifled that of ambition. I may poſſibly be deſpiſed by others, but I ſhall never be deſpicable in my own eyes, while I can juſtly boaſt of having deceived no one. Such, my dear Marquis, are my ſentiments. My anſwer is made; therefore give yourſelf no trouble to enquire who this worthy and unſucceſsful lover is. I never can love him, but owe him, nevertheleſs, eternal acknowledgments and inviolable ſecreſy.

LETTER XXXIX.

From Madam de Ferval *to Mr.* de Ferval, *her ſon.*

Ferval, Jan. 28.

MADAM de Narton, my dear ſon, has communicated to me your letter. I know your heart too well to doubt of your zeal. We are delighted with it, as truly eſtimable. The ſervice you are engaged in, is important, and worthy of a virtuous mind. But, my dear Ferval, endeavour to employ, in ſo honeſt a deſign, only honeſt means. It is always diſagreeable to have recourſe to ſuch as are otherwiſe: I choſe myſelf to mention

to

to you this circumſtance. I am ſenſible that Leonora merits no kind of reſpect, but you ſhould act towards her with juſtice. This is an indiſpenſible conſideration we owe to every one; and is certainly broken through by your corrupting her domeſticks. I know the circumſtances, in which you find yourſelf, ſeem to authorize this proceeding: But, my dear ſon, rather redouble your aſſiduity, and apply only to thoſe, with whoſe aſſiſtance you may not reproach yourſelf. You will think, perhaps, my delicacy, in this particular, a little too refined: I hope not; that delicacy, my ſon, ariſes only from a ſenſe of probity.—If you could find means, indeed, to ſee that Juliet you ſpeak of—But I know too little of the matter to enter into your deſigns. It is very certain nothing can redound more to your honour, than the confidence which Madam de Narton and the Counteſs de St. Sever have placed in you. I am as certain, alſo, that it could not be better placed. The dangers, into which you ſee the blind attachment of the Marquis has betrayed him, ought to increaſe your own deteſtation againſt vice; as the ſteps you are taking to reclaim him, ought to be ſo many engagements to bind you to virtue.

Adieu,

Adieu, my child; Madam de Narton assures you of her friendship, and your sisters of their kindest affections. You well know how dear you are to me.

LETTER XL.

From Mr. de Ferval *to his Mother.*

Paris, Jan. 31.

I Have no less repugnance, my dear mother, than yourself, to make use of such means as I am obliged to employ: But the peculiar nature of the affair, and the confidence placed in me, require it. Be assured, that in the execution of any plan for making my own fortune, I should not have recourse to such means. I could wish, with all my soul, there was no need of it in this. But, without the assistance of Martha, could I ever have procured a sight of the two letters from Juliet, which I have copied and sent you? I could not possibly keep the originals; you may gather from these, what light may be thrown, by the others, on the whole conduct of Leonora. You will soon become perfectly acquainted with her designs, if we continue to observe a little artful management.

ment. Vice would have too much to boaſt of, if Virtue were only to employ againſt it thoſe means which might be authorized by the ſevereſt auſterity. There are occaſions on which the goodneſs of the end may excuſe, if not juſtify the means. I have been able to make no farther diſcovery than the incloſed letters, for this week paſt. The Marquis ſees no company; but ſpends his time either in regretting the ſhort viſits Leonora permits him to make her, or in wiſhing to repeat them, that he may again indulge the ſame regret. His mind is entirely engroſſed by this one object. He hath quarrelled with his friend Valville; which is matter of great triumph to Leonora, who is therefore highly delighted with it. But I haſten to finiſh my own letter, in order that you may peruſe thoſe of Miſs Juliet. May I beg of you to pay my profoundeſt reſpects to Madam de Narton. My ſiſters are ſenſible how much I love them. Incloſed are the new ſongs they aſked for. Permit me, dear mother, to repeat the aſſurances of my tendereſt love and reſpect.

LET-

LETTER XLI.

From Juliet *to* Leonora, *inclosed in the preceding.*

Dec. 18.

YOUR lover, my dear, must be a most strange kind of creature. To be sure, you manage him well; but are you certain that his passion is of a nature to bear the mortification of your refusals? This is what I am afraid of. Accept, therefore, all his presents; put as decent a face on the matter as you will; but still I say, refuse nothing. Go affairs as they will, these are so much clear gain. I am very sorry I cannot send you little Bizac, as he is at present bound to the chariot of a rich, old, foolish widow, in this country, who is ridiculously in love with him. He cannot leave this prize, without running the hazard of losing all the time and trouble he has been at to gain it. In a word, his fortune depends on her. It is a pity! That artful Gascoon would have personated to the life the unfortunate, virtuous, respectful, generous rival of your booby Marquis. Can I be any other way serviceable to you? Your adventure is really singular. For my part, I never had the art

thus

thus to captivate ſuch young and unexperienced hearts. My old lover is a formidable creature, jealous, tyrannical, troubleſome, and brutal; I have been mortified to death for theſe three months that I have been here: but he makes me conſiderable preſents, and therefore I bear with him. It is neceſſary to make proviſion againſt the winter. I have a longing deſire to ſee your little Marquis. It muſt be very pleaſant to hear him offer his *eſteem?*—For heaven's ſake, where did he get that word? It muſt ſound very ſtrange to you, at firſt! Poor boy! I am abſolutely in love with him, he is ſo very fooliſh! But you will teach him wit, and it is but juſt he ſhould pay for his learning. He ſets out a dupe, and will finiſh his ſtudies a knave. It is the way of the world. Farewell, you little huſſy, I have not let Bizac into your ſecret, becauſe he could be of no uſe to you. I am wild, but I have nevertheleſs ſome little diſcretion. Adieu.

LETTER XLII.

From Juliet *to* Leonora, *inclosed also with the preceding, in the last of Mr.* de Ferval.

Saint Fermin, Jan. 16.

WELL, thy projects are really astonishing! A woman of quality, truly! And thou dost intend, my dear, if thou canst, to marry this Marquis!—It must be owned, you do very well; for, at the worst, you risk nothing, if you should not succeed. Between ourselves, however, how can you think of playing the dull, moping part of a modest woman? It will be a high comedy. We shall see how you will shine in it. I love dearly to see you got upon the high-ropes of quality.—If you succeed, you will be the heroine of our whole company. Who knows how far your example.—Yes, there are a number of fools, who only wait to be taught how to make themselves ridiculous. In time these extraordinary things will become so common, that nobody will take notice of them; it is just as we are reconciled to people's faces who are ugly. At times even my old ape amuses me. Those periods are but few and short, indeed: But

what

what can I do? Every body was not born for great adventures, as you are. See what it is to possess at once beauty, wit, and fortitude. I have long known your extraordinary talents; and yet, notwithstanding that, you quite astonish me. Proceed, carry your point if possible; you may command me in any thing. Your interests are mine. I have carefully copied the letter you sent me, and have dispatched it safely to the post-house at Tours. I did not chuse to put it in here, so near; the distance of Tours, the greatness of that city, and all together, will serve the better to amuse the reader. This letter will certainly be with you by Thursday noon; so manage your matters accordingly. I hope you will acquaint me with the effect of this little artifice. If I were in your place, however, I would make sure of something before I quitted the Opera. For, after all, that sister of his, that Valville too, and all these people, may find means to cool the Marquis's courage. Think what an affair it will be for him to marry thee. I say again, however, fear nothing from me; I shall say nothing to Bizac, whose hands are sufficiently full with his widow. He hath already got above twenty thousand livres from her; which is

much better for him than the protection of La Roche. But, now we are on the ſubject of La Roche, what if he ſhould relate his ſtory to the Marquis? You ſhould take particular care, if poſſible, to prevent their meeting. You have done wiſely in preventing it hitherto. Adieu, my dear, forget not your poor Juliet, when you are my Lady Marchioneſs.

LETTER XLIII.

From Madam de Narton *to* Ferval.

Varennes, Feb. 6.

AT preſent, Sir, we ſee very clearly into the deſign of Leonora; but this deſign is terrible. Poor Madam de St. Sever! What would become of her, if ſhe knew all? I ſhall take care not to let her ſee the danger. Her grief would betray the ſecret, and her huſband would ruin every thing. Put every thing in practice to prevent this triumph of vice, and be a little above the ſcruples ſuggeſted by your good mother; which I ſhould regard myſelf, however, upon any other occaſion. What raſhneſs there is in the projects of that wretched Leonora? You can lay down no fixed plan, but muſt be

be directed by circumſtances; I am certain you will take every occaſion to profit by them. The moſt valuable intereſts of an honourable family are now in your hands. What a credit it is for a perſon of your age to merit ſo much eſteem as to be charged with ſo nice a truſt! Go, from time to time, I beg of you, to comfort my unhappy friend. I again repeat that I ſhall tell her nothing. Adieu, Sir; depend on it I ſhall never forget how much I owe to your zeal.

LETTER XLIV.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Feb. 20.

I HAVE not once ſeen my brother, my dear friend, ſince what happened about two months ago. I have gathered from his people, that he keeps no company, except that woman, whom he hath viſited more frequently than ordinary within this week. I know not what paſſed between them yeſterday, but the Marquis returned from her lodgings in a great agitation. He paſſed the night in walking backwards and forwards in his chamber; and having written

to her this morning, her answer threw him into all the appearances of great distress. Her servants say, that when my brother came into that creature's apartment yesterday, she was dressed in a studied deshabille, and seated on a couch, leaning backwards in a very seductive attitude. The kind of despair he was in last night, and which he could not conceal from his domestics, made them think that Leonora was sick. On their enquiry, however, this morning, her woman told them she was very well. Were it possible, my dear, that some misunderstanding between them should proceed to a rupture—But I dare not flatter myself so far. You have heard, without doubt, that Madam de St. Albin is married to Baron d'Orbe. This wedding has farther increased my chagrin. I cannot help regretting she was not destined for my unhappy brother. But at present we have only to think how we may extricate him from the danger he is in. I am very much obliged to Mr. de Ferval, for the pains he hath taken; but I fear he may be disgusted at meeting with so many obstacles. Has he any hopes of success? It is to me astonishing that he knows so little of my brother's conduct. I know more of it than he.

he. After what you have told me of his mother and sisters, I cannot but think you very happy in the neighbourhood of so charming a family. Adieu, my dear friend; desire Madam de Ferval to join her interest with ours, to engage her son to be assiduous in this affair. He is very deserving, and hath much consideration for me; but I fear he does not pursue this business closely. But let not his mother know of these my apprehensions.

LETTER XLV.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, Feb. 19.

CRUEL creature! You forbid me then to see you! Unhappy as I am, what crime have I committed? What but that of loving you to distraction? But how can I love thee otherwise? Forbid me to see you! If thus you chose to return my assiduity and tenderness, ought you to carry your barbarity so far as to increase my passion till I am no longer master of myself? Canst thou think, my adorable girl, that I can ever fail in point of respect to you? No, my dear Leonora; even yesterday, in that fatal moment when the excess of my passion prompted

me to — Did you not then ſee the ſhame, repentance, the terrible confuſion, into which your reproaches threw me? I even adore that virtue which reduces me to deſpair. I ſwear to you, by all that is ſacred, that I never more will offend your modeſty; but do not deprive me of the only happineſs I have left, the pleaſure of ſeeing you. Conſider, my divine charmer, conſider that my life depends on it. I have ſacrificed, alas! every thing to Leonora. You required me to break with Valville: it is done. I no longer continue to ſee my ſiſter; my dear, my affectionate ſiſter. How unhappy! O fatal paſſion! terrible connections! Forgive, forgive, my dear Leonora; thy love may yet make me happy; deign to return my paſſion, to ſee me again, and I will forget all the reſt of the world. For nothing is of any conſequence to me but thee.

LETTER XLVI.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Feb. 20.

NO, Sir, it is impoſſible for me to ſee you without danger. I ſee it, I tremble at it, and will never expoſe myſelf to the like

like again. I do love you—This is the first time I have made that confession, and it shall be the last. I will see you no more. It is indeed a considerable sacrifice I make; but it is what I owe to virtue. After such an unhappy trial, can I, without a criminal temerity, depend on that reserve you promise? It is impossible. Believe me, my dear Marquis, believe me, it costs me not a little to keep you from me, to tear you from my heart.—But, forget this fatal love, suppress this dangerous passion. Be happy, and reflect, if I were ever dear to you, that my honour is the only good I have left: rob me not of that. Take back your presents, I can keep none of them; but my heart will ever retain the grateful remembrance that they were once bestowed. A ray of light begins to illuminate my soul.—Enquire not what I am going to be. I take my leave of the Opera. Ah! why did I not leave it sooner! Wrapt up in my innocence and obscurity, without fortune but without remorse, I shall be able to subsist on my labour, without standing in need of the perfidious presents of men. The difficulty I shall have in accustoming myself to a life of labour and solitude, will be the first expiation of the

faults, which the condition to which I have been bred may have caused me to commit. My conscience is pure; let me then banish from my heart the image of a man I have loved too well; and mayst thou triumph over your passion in like manner. Adieu.

LETTER XLVII.

From Mr de Ferval *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Feb. 20.

HAVING heard that the Marquis left the apartments of Leonora last night, with an air of desparation; I procured an audience of Mrs. Martha to-day, in order to know, if there was any likelihood of a rupture, and the occasion of the Marquis's chagrin. Mrs. Martha's information was as follows. Ever since the affair of the letter, the Marquis has been more frequent in his visits than before; sometimes spending the whole day with Leonora; of whom he seems more fond than ever; while on her part she looks still handsomer every day; taking all the pains in the world to set herself off by her dress. In short, says Martha, we have now never done with the toilette. The putting on a hand-

a handkerchief only takes up sometimes half an hour. And this is done with so much affectation — very modestly covering the breast on one side, and on the other displaced as it were by accident. Sometimes she is employed in dressing when the Marquis comes in; when she plays off all her little artifices and premeditated mistakes, which — which, — stay till I recollect — aye, "which give "even to voluptuousness the charms of mo-"desty," as the Marquis says. You must know, that he caught her yesterday before she had adjusted her tucker, when in haste she threw a cloak over her shoulders, but so loosely, that I who stood behind her chair presently saw it slipping down behind, and would accordingly have drawn it up gently on her shoulders again. But she, perceiving my design, turned herself hastily about, and let it drop off entirely. O horrible! said she, rising up in seeming confusion; and, striving modestly to hide her neck with her hand, pretended to look about for a handkerchief. It was to no purpose that I offered her the cloak; she kept still chiding me, till recovering, as it were, from her surprize; O, my God! said she, I was looking for another.

other. Come, give me that, and be more careful another time.

I can aſſure you, continued my informant, that this piece of fineſſe was premeditated. In the mean time the Marquis almoſt devoured her with his eyes. Soon after, ſhe complained of the head-ach, and intimating ſhe had need of reſt, the Marquis left her. As ſoon as he was gone, ſhe new-dreſſed herſelf in a moſt raviſhing undreſs, putting on an agreeable cap tied with a roſe-coloured ribband, a bed-gown of roſe-coloured taffety, ornamented with white lace, and a petticoat of the ſame; in ſhort, her whole dreſs was calculated to ſet her forth to the beſt advantage. Never did I ſee any thing ſo pretty; ſhe was then certainly the fineſt brunette in the world; nor did ever her large black eyes appear more ſparkling than through that look of languiſhment which I obſerved her practiſe in the glaſs. An air of tenderneſs, diffuſed over her whole countenance, made her indeed altogether charming. I don't know whether you know her ſmile; but it is enchanting. Her very fine leg is ſeen alſo to great advantage in this undreſs. She was a long time at her toilette; after which ſhe ſeated herſelf upon a ſofa, reclining on a heap

of

of cuſhions; an attitude that diſplayed her hands and arms to perfection. Then ordering me to ſhut the window-curtain, I was diſmiſſed. It was not long before the Marquis returned. I know not what paſſed between them, but of a ſudden her bell rang violently. I ran up, and found the Marquis at her feet, in a ſtrange kind of confuſion. Stay in the anti-chamber, Martha, ſays ſhe. And you, Sir, ſpeaking to the Marquis, pleaſe to be gone. I went out, and ſo could not hear diſtinctly what paſſed; but ſhe talked much of inſult, of being ſurprized, and ſo forth; to all which the Marquis replied only by ſighs. In about a quarter of an hour he took his leave, croſſing the anti-chamber with his handkerchief up to his eyes. I obſerved him alſo as he went out, lift up one of his hands to heaven, and cry out pathetically, *Unhappy as I am! Is it poſſible!* After his departure my miſtreſs ſeemed very thoughtful and diſturbed, and ſat down to write a letter. This is very certain, that ſhe this day quitted the Opera. The Marquis ſent to her again to-day; ſhe was in her cloſet, where I watched her without being ſeen, while ſhe read his letter. In the peruſal of it, ſhe ſhook her head two or three times, with an air of much

much concern, ending it with the exclamation, *Oh! he muſt come hither again; he will be here again.* Having given this letter another reading, ſhe called for pen and ink, and ſat down to anſwer it. She was a long time, a very long time in writing the anſwer. I believe ſhe began her letter over again ſeveral times. At length, however, ſhe ſent it. This is all I know, Sir, of the adventure; and I am not ſuch a fool but I can ſee.—Go, go, ſhe does nothing without having a deſign in it. That head-ach yeſterday, and ſo much trouble in dreſſing! I know —

Tedious as Mrs. Martha's hiſtory had been, ſhe ſeemed not to have any inclination to finiſh it. I was obliged, therefore, to make uſe of the ſame means to obtain her ſilence, as I had done to make her ſpeak; by giving her ſome ſolid proofs of my gratitude. Upon which, dropping me a curt'ſey, ſhe reaſſured me that I ſhould always find her a woman of her word, for that ſhe never knew what it was to deceive any one. So, promiſing to let me know the iſſue of this adventure, we parted.

It muſt be confeſſed, that this Leonora is a very artful woman. I pity the Marquis extremely. I am afraid—but I ſhall ſee

Juliet

Juliet one of these days; she is expected here directly. That Bizac, she speaks of, is an adventurer of an agreeable figure enough. Leonora assists him, only because she once admired him; she presented him to La Roche as her relation, and he gave him some little employ; of which he has deprived him again since his rupture with Leonora. This fellow, it seems, has got into the good graces of a foolish old woman, whom he is bringing to ruin as fast as he can. He is one of Leonora's best friends; but Juliet only is her confident. You see, Madam, it is impossible to get better information. I have not endeavoured to see the Marquis of late. It were to no purpose, as I am certain he is more passionately in love than ever. I do my best, however, to console Madam de St. Sever, and to conceal from her every thing that might increase her chagrin. Her apprehensions and uneasiness greatly affect me. She is really a most respectable woman; and her husband wants only a little discretion, and a little wit, to be a very polite man; but I am greatly afraid of his intermeddling in this affair. Adieu, Madam, I hope you never will have any occasion to regret the confidence with which you have honoured me.

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LETTER XLVIII.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, Feb. 22.

WHERE is the monſter ſo ſavage as to reſiſt ſo many charms! I ſhould bluſh for myſelf if I were not vanquiſhed. Am I then dear to you, my adorable girl? Is it for my ſake you have diſdained to accept an offer that would have made your fortune? Have you done this for me, and ſhall I ſee you plunged into indigence and miſery? Is this the price—Your virtue, ſtill more powerful than your love, baniſhes me for ever.—I have indeed too well deſerved this treatment; but let me intreat you, my dear Leonora, to forget, to forgive.—Let the gift of my hand repair the errors my tranſports have committed. Deign to accept of my hand, and be the happineſs of my life. A ſecret but lawful union ſhall join our hearts for ever; and we will enjoy the pureſt happineſs in the midſt of virtue and pleaſure. Forgive, my dear girl, the precautions which I owe to my name and family, to the prejudices of mankind. Unhappy prejudices! Theſe only have hitherto reſtrained me from doing you juſtice. Ah!

why

why cannot I acknowledge you for my wife in the face of the whole univerſe! This would be a noble triumph for thy virtue; but let the affection and tenderneſs of thy huſband ſupply the place of that rank and thoſe honours which are ſo juſtly your due. O my Leonora! how terribly am I affected! Will you not permit me to ſee you to-day? I will not offend your delicacy, by ſaying any thing of the ſituation, of which I give you the ſtrongeſt aſſurance. Your beauty, my dear girl, your virtue, my own love, my eſteem, my gratitude; ſuch is the ſource of your privileges and my obligations.

LETTER XLIX.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Feb. 23.

I Am ſenſible, as I ought, my dear Marquis, of the value of that ſacrifice you are willing to make me. My heart is penetrated with gratitude; but it is not ſeduced by that generous offer, which I cannot, which I ought not to accept. My fortune is too cruel, perhaps; but I was not born for you. I know that you can never avow ſuch a marriage. The diſtance there is between us,

us, the profession it was my misfortune to be brought up to, in short, every thing opposes such an avowal. And how shall I expose myself to the inevitable danger of a secret union? No, my dear Marquis, I should prefer indigence, even the severest indigence, to such a state of mortification. What should I not suffer from the reflection, that in me the world despised your wife, and that the secret you would be obliged to keep authorized that contempt. You would soon experience what reason you would have to blush for such an union; as the meanness of my condition would debase yours. Your relations, your friends, the public, ignorant, or pretending to be ignorant of your marriage, would throw out such animadversions on your conduct, as you would feel by so much the more severely, as you would be destitute of the means to evade them. How would all this embitter both your life and mine? Our misfortunes might extend, indeed, still farther. Renounce, therefore, my dear Marquis, such impracticable projects! Forget your fatal passion, and let us never see each other more. Never, do I say! And can I pronounce that word? Cruel fortune! — I should not merit, however, those senti-

ments

ments with which you honour me, if I did not act thus. What dignity, in my own opinion, do you confer on me by your esteem! I shall for the future regard myself as the woman whom the Marquis de Roselle hath deigned to set upon an equality with himself. What an encouragement is this to virtue! Adieu for ever.

LETTER L.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, Feb. 24.

INHUMAN, barbarous creature! Is it possible — Will my life only satisfy your cruelty? What terrible consequences doth your imagination present to you? My fortune lies at your feet. I will settle upon you two thirds of it on the day of marriage. You are sensible, alas! how little it is in my power to do more. Wretched as I am! And hast thou really given orders to be denied to me? Does Leonora forbid me her house? — Heavens! What will become of me? At once furious and feeble, the miserable sport of passions and prejudices. Oh, Leonora! In the name of that virtue which is so dear to you, save me, save me from despair.

LETTER LI.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Feb. 24.

IT is done, my dear Roſelle; tho' I ſhould die with grief, tho' I ſhould incur your hate, my reſolution is taken. Permit me to give you an example of fortitude. I will never accept the hand of a man, who ſhould bluſh at being thought my huſband. Not poverty, nor death itſelf, can appear ſo terrible to me as ſuch a ſtate of humiliation. Had I been born — But ſuppreſs that ſuppoſition. Baniſh even the idea of Leonora; whom you will ſee no more. Think me dead to you, and you ſhall live eternally in my heart. — What have I ſaid? Unfortunate creature! If you have found any virtues in my conduct; if I have, in any degree, merited your eſteem, have ſome regard to thoſe misfortunes you have brought on me. Ceaſe to diſturb my repoſe; I will pay a due regard to yours. Expect no other anſwer. Adverſity hath given me courage; do thou follow my example. Alas! what compariſon is there between your ſituation and mine! Your rank, your fortune, your youth, preſent you with the brilliant proſpect of an happy

futu-

futurity: for me, without resources, without fortune, without friends—But I will not proceed in the picture. Adieu, my dear, my too susceptible Marquis; this is the last letter I shall write you, being myself afraid of that tenderness which it is my duty to resist. Alas! how shall I be able to do it? For you, indeed, the honour of having overcome your passion, of having sacrificed to your name and family what you conceived to be your happiness, that honour which so many efforts render more conspicuous, will soon indemnify you for the sacrifice you have made.

LETTER LII.

From the Countess de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Feb. 28.

MY brother is so extremely ill, my dear friend, that his life is in danger.—I have just been to see him.—Good heaven, support me.—I am quite overcome. Mr. de Ferval will write to you of the particulars.

LETTER LIII.

From Mr. de Ferval *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, March 2.

YOU are already informed, Madam, of the extremity to which our dear Roſelle is reduced. About four days after the ſcene which paſſed between her and the Marquis at her lodgings, ſhe totally refuſed him admittance. He returned grievouſly agitated, and wrote to her. The anſwer he received from her (the particulars of which I know not) threw him into deſpair. He fell ſenſeleſs to the ground, while the blood, thrown violently upwards to his head, ſwelled the veſſels about his throat, and almoſt ſuffocated him. He was let blood immediately, but this did not prevent a fever, which hath confined him to his bed for three days; during which time he hath been blooded four times. Yeſterday morning he had another violent fit; in the tranſports of which he called ſeveral times on Leonora; taking every body that approached him for that creature. His paroxyſms are long. I reviſited him yeſterday evening; when I found him more tranquil, the fit was gone off, and he had very little fever: but he was extremely faint and weak. I could ſee the tears

ſteal

ſteal down his cheeks, as I approached his bed, which greatly affected me, as did alſo his manner of thanking me for the proofs I gave him of my friendſhip. He begged of me to continue to come every day, and not to abandon him. I promiſed I would not leave him; and took that opportunity to ſpeak to him of his ſiſter, aſking him if he would not chuſe to ſee her. At this queſtion he fetched a deep ſigh, and covered his face with the bed-cloaths. I went immediately to acquaint the Counteſs of her brother's illneſs; which I did with all the neceſſary precautions, to prevent alarming her. She ſet out directly to pay him a viſit. When ſhe came to his bedſide, they looked affectionately at each other, and wept, for ſome time, in mournful ſilence. The Phyſician being apprehenſive that this moving interview might be attended with bad conſequences, the poor Counteſs was obliged to retire. This morning ſhe came again, and was preſent during another paroxyſm of her unhappy brother; who did not even know her till after the fit was over. She now determines not to leave him. He is a little better this evening. I will inform you daily of the ſtate of his illneſs.

March 3.

HE hath been very ill again all night. The Countess, having asked the Physician's opinion, thought it necessary for her to think of advising her brother to prepare for the worst. With this view, that worthy sister, mustering up her whole fortitude, placed herself by the side of his bed, as he came out of one of his fits, and, taking him affectionately by the hand, asked him how he found himself? Very poorly, said he; I am afraid, my dear sister, that I am dangerously ill. I hope, brother, replied she, your case is not quite desperate, if we take care; your youth and the goodness of your constitution are powerful resources. Your illness, to be sure, is dangerous, and may vary every moment; the least trouble or agitation may affect you much.—I have a great deal to do, sister, and I am by no means tranquil.—An entire submission, brother, to the will of the Supreme Being, a perfect confidence in his goodness, a clear conscience—Nay, mine reproaches me only with foibles; but, my dear sister, do you believe that—I believe, my dear friend, that God will restore you to our prayers; but I think it is of him only you will obtain that tranquillity of which you

stand

ſtand ſo much in need. You are not dying, but ſick — Alas, ſaid he, I ſhould never regret the loſs of life, if — You ſhould be reconciled, brother, to part with it, whenever it is the will of God. A perfect reſignation to the decrees of Providence is neceſſary to all; but it is the duty of a Chriſtian — Alas! my ſiſter, other cauſes — O! trouble not yourſelf, my dear friend, about any thing but what relates to heaven; turn your thoughts from all other objects. — Ah! may I, can I do this? — Yes, by aſſiſtance from above. — And do you think, ſiſter, I am going to die? Do you really think ſo? Anſwer me. — I hope, brother, you will not die; but God only knows. — Am I then in danger? — You have been, and may fall again into the ſame diſtreſs. — The will of Heaven be done, replied he; I have a great many affairs to ſettle. I deſire — Yes, you, my ſiſter, will be my executrix: I will entruſt you to fulfil my deſires — I hope, my dear brother — Heaven preſerve me from that misfortune; but, if it ſhould happen, you may depend on me — I do depend on it. — A fainting fit now ſeizing him, interrupted this intereſting converſation. He recovered by degrees in about half an

hour; but was then so extremely weak, that the Countess drew his curtains, and passed the rest of the night by the side of his bed without speaking to him. In the morning the Physician found him much better. And I could not help telling Madam de St. Sever how much I had admired her behaviour. Alas, Sir, replied she, these occasions are very terrible: but how can we neglect such important duties? It was my business to prepare my brother to think of death; a more solemn preparation might have terrified him. He would have conceited himself in a manner already dead; and this terror, added to the weakness he labours under from sickness, would have served rather to depress his spirits than support them. One cannot too soon advise the sick to apply to God; but we ought ever to avoid throwing them into horrors equally detrimental to the mind as well as the body. It is necessary to prepare him, by representing to him the danger of his situation; but the dearest friends ought to undertake this alarming representation. Affection and confidence are never more indispensibly necessary than on this occasion.

The Marquis, after his paroxysm was over, which was shorter and milder than the preceding,

preceding, ſeemed deſirous of talking to his ſiſter again about his affairs, and of relieving himſelf of ſomething lying on his conſcience. His ſiſter, however, interrupted him. You are now better, my dear, ſaid ſhe, and have need of ſome repoſe. Compoſe yourſelf, my dear, and fear nothing; I will be conſtantly with you. — But if I ſhould relapſe again into the ſame danger?—I ſhall perceive it, my dear brother, and will give you timely notice. — You promiſe ſo to do. — Yes, I do. — I ſhall have a conſiderable legacy to make. — Sir, ſaid ſhe, turning to the Phyſician, do you think it ſafe for my brother to write? By no means, replied the Doctor; it will be very imprudent to put himſelf into any agitation. Well, then, ſiſter, ſaid Roſelle, I will tell it you — If I ſhould die, indeed, there would be no occaſion for a written teſtament with you. — But your huſband, Mr. de St. Sever — I will anſwer for him as well as for myſelf. — But perhaps, ſiſter, the object of my generoſity may not appear to you worthy of it. Alas, brother, if I ſhould be ſo unhappy as to have ſuch a mournful duty to diſcharge, you may be aſſured I ſhall reſpect only your intentions, beſtow your gifts on whomſoever you pleaſe.

I am

I am not insensible of the regard which is due to the dying requests of — Here the tears burst from her eyes; her heart was too full to proceed. The Marquis raised his head with difficulty, and, seeing her situation, gently pressed her hand, while both kept looking at each other in affectionate silence, till at length the Marquis fell into a gentle sleep. I now prevailed on the Countess to take a little repose.

March 4.

EVERY thing continues favourable, and the Physician gives us great hopes. The fever is much abated since the fine sleep the Marquis got yesterday. He had a return of the fit, however, to-night, but his transports were not so violent. In his delirium he kept constantly calling out on Leonora. I could only distinguish her name, blended inarticulately with the words, *religion* — *honour* — *love*, and sometimes *my sister* — *my dear sister* — *forgive* — *forgive me* — *virtue*, — &c. His agitation was very great in pronouncing these words; tho' the fit did not last long. He has been very tranquil this morning: Mr. de St. Sever does not stir from the anti-chamber. He has even insisted on coming into the room; but as the Marquis

quis has not ſeen him ſince what paſſed between them about ſix weeks ago, we are afraid his preſence now might diſcompoſe him too much. We dare not admit him therefore as yet; which is a circumſtance that adds to the embarraſſment of the Counteſs; who ſupports the fatigue of being, ſtrictly ſpeaking, her brother's nurſe, with ſurprizing courage and aſſiduity.

March 5.

HAVE I not always told you, Madam, that the Count de St. Sever was an invincible Marplot, and that he would be perpetually doing miſchief, tho' meaning well? The patient had paſſed a tolerable night; his fit was ſtill ſhorter and leſs violent than that of yeſterday. At eight o'clock this morning he was in a profound ſleep. The Counteſs, as well as myſelf, had fallen to ſleep alſo, from the fatigue of having been kept awake for ſeveral preceding nights. Mr. de St. Sever ſeized this opportunity to come into the chamber; when, puſhing the ſervants aſide, he ran to the bed, and haſtily throwing open the curtains, ſuddenly awakened the poor Marquis, who ſtarted up, while the Count addreſſed him, with great concern and vociferouſneſs:

ſerouſneſs: "Good morning to my good friend: What, would you not let me ſee you? I am ſure I love you as if you were my own ſon."—At this he wept. In the mean time, the aſtoniſhed Marquis knew not who was ſpeaking to him; till, awakened at the noiſe, we ran to the bed. Bleſs me! Sir, ſaid Madam de St. Sever, how could you be ſo imprudent as to wake him? —What, was he aſleep?—Yes—I am ſorry I came in at ſuch an improper time; but why did you not admit me at a more proper ſeaſon? Then, turning to the Marquis, he went on: "Well, child, don't take it amiſs; I could not contain myſelf any longer without ſeeing you." I am obliged to you for your kindneſs, returned the Marquis, very low and feebly. Why, you ſeem to be very weak, ſaid the Count. You are not managed properly. If you will be ruled by me, and take ſome good reſtoratives, ſome good old Burgundy, now—What's that you propoſe, my dear, ſaid the Counteſs; he hath not got rid of the fever.—Nay, returned he, I propoſe nothing; but this I know—in ſhort, Marquis, you have been very ill, every body gave you over, and faith I was of that opinion too: you have had

had a terrible ſhock, indeed, my good friend. Well, I hope now your follies will have an end. I took it much to heart that you was offended with me, you little rebel, you; but ſtill I cannot help loving you. —

During this diſcourſe, the Counteſs made all the ſigns ſhe could, to put a ſtop to it; but to no purpoſe. It was at length interrupted by the arrival of the Phyſician, who, ſeeing us all round the bed, concluded the patient was grown worſe. He found him, in fact, a good deal fluttered; but, being informed of the occaſion, thought proper to make us all retire. At this, the Count was diſpleaſed, and ſaid the Doctor was an ignorant pretender; offering to fetch two or three Empirics, whom he has taken it into his head to recommend. The Counteſs, however, begged that the Phyſician firſt called in, might proceed in his regular practice: On which her huſband withdrew, ſaying that, as his advice was not to be taken, he would have nothing more to do in the affair,

The Marquis hath been much leſs compoſed ſince this unlucky intruſion. His ſucceeding paroxyſm was more violent than the former. At preſent he is much better; the

fit is over; but it hath weakened him to the laſt degree.

March 6,

THANK God his life is at length out of danger. The fever hath left him; he was but little affected by it laſt night. The Phyſician aſſures us the fit will not return; but I am afraid the poor Marquis is ſo reduced, that he will be a long while in recovering his former health and ſtrength. He juſt now called for his valet-de-chambre, with whom he deſired to be left alone. I knew it was to aſk whether Leonora had been informed of his danger. He was told that Martha came every day to enquire after his health. He deſired to ſpeak with her the next time ſhe came. I ſhall know what he ſays to her.—

Martha has juſt been here; the Marquis hath ſeen her alone; and, as ſhe informs me, gave her the following meſſage for her miſtreſs. "As I cannot write, tell Leonora that I have ſufficiently expiated my fault. Tell her it is ſhe alone who calls me back to life, to which, if I return—I beg of her to write to me, one line, one ſingle word.—If ſhe would not come to ſee me, let her at leaſt write to me."

This

This ſhort diſcourſe, it ſeems, was interrupted by frequent and profound ſighs. He appears to me extremely thoughtful ever ſince. We ſat by him above half an hour before he ſpoke a word. At length he broke ſilence, by aſking his ſiſter, if ſhe was not greatly fatigued? She would have perſuaded him to the contrary, but he inſiſted on her taking repoſe. I feel myſelf out of danger, ſays he, and therefore beg of you to leave me to-night. Your care of me in the day time will now be ſufficient. She would have ſtill oppoſed his deſire, but he was too preſſing; and intreated us both to go home. We ſhall leave him, therefore, this evening, ſo that I ſhall not write to you daily, as I have done for ſome time paſt; but will inform you occaſionally of every thing that is intereſting; and particularly of the progreſs of his cure. Adieu, Madam; the acknowledgments of the amiable Counteſs give me ſo much confuſion, that I muſt intreat you to ſay nothing of yours.

LETTER LIV.

From Mr. de Ferval *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, March 8.

THE Marquis is now, Madam, absolutely out of danger. His fever has left him these three days, and the Physicians pronounce him to be in the most promising state. His heart, however, is by no means cured. The Countess spends whole days with him. In the mean time, he appears to me very thoughtful, sorrowful, and reserved. I am apprehensive his mind is agitated by some terrible conflict; but I tremble to think I have guessed the cause. I observe him, every now and then, look stedfastly at his sister; then sigh and turn his eyes, abashed, on the ground. At other times he sits silent, while his reflections seem to work strongly on his passions; the motion of his lips betraying his earnest converse with himself. It is with difficulty we can awaken him from these profound reveries. He received a billet from Leonora this morning, which he read several times over, and put under his pillow. He hath since seemed less sorrowful, but more absent than before. You need be under no farther apprehensions,

Madam,

Madam, on account of his health; for my part, I am fully assured of his recovery. At the same time, the services I have had the happiness to render him in his illness, appear to have made him a sincere friend to me, as they have strengthened my attachment to him.

LETTER LV.

From Leonora *to the Marquis.*

Paris, Mar. 8.

WHAT a trial, my dear Marquis, of my love! No. I could never have survived you. I have almost reproached myself for the most virtuous resolutions. But is it possible for virtue and honour to cause remorse? How have I trembled for your life! But Heaven has been pleased to restore it and may every future hour of it be fortunate! You cannot be insensible of the impropriety of my coming to see you. Do not, therefore, desire it. Adieu, my dear Roselle. If you but live and are happy, I cannot be altogether miserable.

LETTER LVI.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, March 11.

I HAVE been ſo weak for theſe three days paſt, that I have not been able to anſwer your letter. Believe me, my dear and lovely friend, I ſeize the firſt moment in which I am able to hold my pen, to thank you. The terrible proſpect of death hath ſet every object before me in its true light. Under thoſe dreadful circumſtances my prejudices diſappeared, my vanity was annihilated. I will ſubject your virtue to no farther trials. I ardently wiſh to ſee you; but decorum, it is true, requires you ſhould not come to me. Adieu! dear idol of my ſoul! thou better half of myſelf! Adieu. I am ſtill ſo weak that I dare not indulge myſelf longer in the pleaſure of writing to you.

LETTER LVII.

From Mr. de Ferval *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Mar. 15.

OUR patient, Madam, hath not kept his bed for four days paſt: but continues daily

daily to gather ſtrength. Mr. Valville juſt now ſent up his name; the Marquis deſired I would prevent his coming up: on which I went down, and told him the Marquis was not yet well enough to ſee any body. He did not ſeem to believe me, but received this refuſal with a ſmile. I cannot be angry, ſaid he, with a man that is frantic; I ſee his brain is actually turned! What monſtrous extravagance! Pray, continued he, is the Marquis ſtill in love with that creature? Indeed, Sir, I replied, I am not the confident of his amours, but I am afraid his paſſion is not abated; which gives me great uneaſineſs. It is ſcandalous, ſaid he, that ſuch a whim ſhould laſt ſo long: I abſolutely bluſh for his folly. Adieu, Sir, I ſhall wait till this idle love-fit is over, and then I ſhall ſee him. In the mean time I ſhall not intrude on him; indeed a ſick bed-chamber is a kind of purgatory to me. As he is out of danger, I am ſatisfied.—I am apt to think, Madam, that this Mr. Valville hath not a very tender heart.

At my return up ſtairs, I found the Counteſs alone with her brother; who appeared much moved, and begged I would excuſe him for a little while, as he had ſome buſi-

neſs of importance to communicate to his ſiſter. I went out. What he was going to ſay to her, I know not; but I am almoſt afraid to gueſs. You will certainly know it from Madam de St. Sever.

LETTER LVIII.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Mar. 17.

ALAS! my compaſſionate friend, what a ſcene have I got to deſcribe; But I know not if I have the power; my ſpirits have been quite exhauſted; and I am, even at preſent, in that ſtrong agitation, which uſually ſucceeds ſuch violent efforts of the mind. I will endeavour, nevertheleſs, to recover myſelf.—I ought indeed to fortify myſelf ſtrongly againſt that tenderneſs and compaſſion which I feel for my unhappy brother.

Mr. de Ferval having left the Marquis and me together, as he informed you, my brother ſeemed much pleaſed; and I ſaw by the embarraſſment of his looks, that he had ſomething particular to communicate. He was ſome time before he ventured to break ſilence; but the proofs of my affection and tenderneſs

gave

gave him confidence at length to lay open his heart. My dear, my generous sister, said he, throwing his arms about my neck, will, I am certain, condescend to hear what I have to say; at least I hope, nay, I entreat it. To this I replied, by returning his affectionate embrace. I have recovered my health, continued he; but the cause of my malady is not removed; it is rooted in my heart. I am in love. That confession alone may serve to account for all my past behaviour to you. I concealed it from you, because I knew the discovery would only serve to afflict you; and I was in hopes of getting the better of my passion. But since my unhappy love hath brought me to the brink of the grave, and is perhaps the only means to preserve my life, it is expedient for me to declare the excess of my passion, in order to engage your pity. It is needless to speak of what I have suffered. You may judge of this, my dear sister, by the circumstances in which you have seen me, and from which your generous care hath delivered me. Compleat the work you have begun, permit me to be no longer unhappy, and let me still live for you.—For me, brother! I would readily give the half of my life to contribute to the happiness

of yours. Is the person you love deserving of you? — Yes, sister, she is honest and virtuous. Probity and virtue are the only distinction in minds. Having such sentiments they are all upon an equality, and are naturally united. Whether upon the stage or upon the throne, they merit equal homage and respect. The humiliating situation to which fortune hath condemned Leonora — Leonora! O brother! — Alas! sister, her profession is her misfortune, not her fault.

Prepossessed as I was of the affair, I could not forbear exclaiming at the mention of Leonora. That I might not offend my brother, however, I composed myself as well as I could, and told him very coolly, that her choice alone of such a profession, sufficiently condemned her. How can a woman be thought virtuous, said I, who voluntarily exposes her name to public shame? Virtue secludes itself within the precincts of honour; and we see, that even when women have banished virtue from their hearts, they endeavour to preserve the appearance of it. Nothing but vice can willingly embrace infamy. — Hold, sister; are you acquainted with the circumstances that first reduced her to embrace

embrace this way of life? We ought not to be too hasty to condemn the unfortunate. Their very faults are often nothing more than additional involuntary misfortunes. Indigence leads them to the first asylum that presents itself; so that, if they should cherish the little virtue they have left, when they perceive what they have suffered in the public opinion, do they not merit all our indulgence and compassion? Let us lament, let us pity them, my dear sister, before we condemn them. — I am not insensible, brother, that candour is due to the unfortunate; but let not your sensibility deceive you. Can you imagine that if your Leonora had been truly virtuous, she could have found no resource but in the Opera? Virtue will embrace indigence to avoid shame; but hath never recourse to shame to avoid indigence. Leonora might easily support herself by needle-work, in service, or by the charity of well-disposed minds. A state of servitude, chosen in necessity, had rendered her indigence at least respectable; whereas by preferring the stage, her heart resigned itself at once to temptation and vice. Is it possible for such unhappy women to live merely on their talents as players, without trafficking

with their charms? Many of them have no other merit than their beauty, and their views of fortune are solely founded on the inordinate passions they inspire. But, supposing their intentions ever so pure, is it possible for those who are continually subjected to the most seductive temptations to vice, to remain attached to virtue, which presents to their view nothing but austerity and mortification? Should there be any one capable of so much fortitude, her virtue itself would soon compel her to fly from the dangers with which she would be surrounded.

What! said my brother, with the impatient air of a man who could contain himself no longer, is it impossible then for an Opera-singer to be virtuous? The Town, Madam, the Town, who are wicked and unjust, who calumniate these women even before their conduct hath debased them; it is the Town —Nay, brother, said I, let us not grow warm; that is not the way to reason: we shall soon forget that we are brother and sister, and shall wander from the point. Permit me, then, to tell you, that in general, those actresses who pass for virtuous, are perhaps only the most decent; that if there be among them some who are entitled to a

kind

kind of respect, they are such whose natural genius and talents have prompted them to distinguish themselves, and have thereby obtained, with the applause of the public, the flattering distinction which is annexed to extraordinary success. But it appears to me, (I hope without offence to you, brother,) that Leonora cannot be ranked either among those actresses we admire, or those to whose personal character is paid the least regard.—What is the voice or opinion of the Town to me, if I know them to be false and unjust? Would you give up an innocent creature to the fury of a prejudiced populace, excited by misrepresentation and calumny?—No, I agree with you, brother, that we ought to put little confidence in the prejudices of the public; but we ought to put still less in our own passions. You are young, ingenuous, and honest. These artful women, used to put on all appearances, and play various parts, well know how easily hypocrisy can impose on simplicity, and how far the mask of virtue may seduce such an heart as yours. There are many persons much more experienced and clear-sighted than you, that have had the misfortune to fall into their fatal snares.—All this I know,

said

ſaid he; but I have the moſt undoubted proof of the virtue of Leonora. I have found her ſo frank, ſo noble, ſo diſintereſted! She wants only a title and eſtate, to render her one of the moſt reſpectable of women. Who can blame me for rewarding her virtue? Thoſe only who are without virtue themſelves. I will repair the wrongs which fortune hath done to her merit; I will raiſe her to the condition to which ſhe ought to have been born; and you will ſee, that the very public, who calumniated Leonora, will have a proper reſpect for the Marchioneſs de Roſelle.

Here he ſtopped, and gave a deep ſigh, like a man who had juſt got rid of ſomething that lay heavy at his heart. I obſerved him ſtedfaſtly, and perceived he was for ſome time wholly taken up with this pleaſure. I ſaw that, while he was in this agitation, he would neither hear nor underſtand any thing I might ſay, to oppoſe his deſign. He had introduced it, by a preliminary apology, the validity of which it was perhaps needleſs to diſpute, as I could have well admitted it without weakening thoſe powerful arguments I had to produce againſt ſuch a deſign itſelf. But the force of truth, and my indignation

at

at the circumſtances, led me on. After a pretty long ſilence, the Marquis, ſeeming to recover his attention, looked at me as if he waited for my anſwer. I had one ready for him.

Have you, ſaid I, temper enough to attend, and fortitude enough to hear me? I hope I have, replied he, I ought and will endeavour it; but, ſiſter, continued he with a ſmile, prepoſſeſſion hath its zeal, its infatuation, as well as paſſion.—As it is your cauſe, brother, I am to plead, ſome allowance ſhould be made for the zeal of a ſiſter; my chief prepoſſeſſion in this caſe is in behalf of you; it is one of the prepoſſeſſions of nature; it is ſuperior to all others, and attached only to my own duty and your real intereſt. I will even be as tender as poſſible of the object of your paſſion. Ah! would to heaven! my dear brother! would to heaven! that woman was ſuch as you imagine! I would appeal to herſelf, and truſt your honour in her hands. If ſhe be really virtuous, ſhe will reinſpire you with thoſe ſentiments of delicacy and decorum, which a blind paſſion only hath made you forget. If ſhe hath any principle of honour herſelf, ſhe will dread the thought of debaſing you

to

to elevate herſelf. If ſhe loves you, ſhe will never conſent to expoſe you to the diſguſt, chagrin, and repentance, which muſt enſue on taking ſo mortifying a ſtep. If ſhe be prudent, ſhe will avoid an elevation, which ſhe will be ſenſible of only by the moſt humiliating circumſtances and reflections.

Do not flatter yourſelf, brother, that your name is ſufficiently illuſtrious to efface the ignominy, attendant on that of Leonora, without being itſelf tarniſhed by the union. You will be more debaſed by her name than ſhe will be honoured by yours; and tho' the public ſhould pay ſome reſpect to the Marchioneſs de Roſelle, do you think it will ſpare you? that publick, which you have reſpected ſo little? that publick, which knows that your birth impoſes on you the duty of behaving with decorum and dignity? that publick, which is the jealous avenger of honour, of which it is both the lawgiver and judge, ſenſible that it ſhould reſide in the breaſts of perſons of your rank, in its utmoſt purity and majeſty; and ready to puniſh with obloquy all thoſe who venture to violate its ſacred laws? You may, doubtleſs, find your conduct approved of, by ſome vain

and

and contemptible individuals, who pique themſelves on ſingularity, and are ever oppoſing the moſt reſpectable of public opinions, in order to be excuſed from obſerving that decency and decorum which they neceſſarily impoſe; but ſuch perſons are themſelves ſo baſe and worthleſs, that their very ſuffrage is diſgraceful. You may find ſome among theſe mean enough to flatter you, from motives of intereſt; and others, whimſical and capricious enough to beſtow diſintereſted approbation on the follies of others. But put the caſe home to them; aſk them ſeriouſly if they would themſelves act in the ſame manner, or approve of a ſimilar conduct in their children or brothers, and you will find them change their tone. The utmoſt conſolation you are to expect, is the pity of ſuſceptible and indulgent minds; that compaſſion which they naturally feel for the weak and the unhappy.

He ſeemed to liſten to what I ſaid with looks of profound attention; when, raiſing his head as I ſtopped, he anſwered, that he did not ſeek either his juſtification or happineſs in the opinion of others; but in the teſtimony of a good conſcience, his love, his Leonora—and in a ſenſe of true honour

and

and virtue, Madam, added he, with an air of fierceneſs and reſolution. Virtue! ſaid I, (perceiving myſelf warmed and my ſoul riſing within me,) honour! conſcience! brother. Do you expect conſolation and repoſe in theſe? They will reproach you every day of your life for your unworthy alliance. They will daily repreſent to your reflection that violation of decorum, juſtice, reaſon, and nature, which will be the conſequence of ſuch an hateful ſacrifice of your duty. And, indeed, what right have you as a citizen, adorned with prerogatives and honours; what right, I ſay, have you to pervert the order of ſociety, which, in diſtinguiſhing the ſtations of individuals for the good of the ſtate, hath in effect engaged that ſuch as ſhe places in an honourable rank ſhould be neither ſo mean nor ungrateful as to diſturb the public harmony by their own debaſement? The order of ſociety hath annexed duties and obligations to rank and diſtinction; and you would hardly violate its laws, becauſe thoſe laws, conſonant with religion and virtue, have choſen to truſt the heart with their obſervance, and have no other avengers than public diſgrace and contempt. By what authority do you, who by birth and

rank

rank are more particularly entrusted with that noble deposit, the preservation of public order, disgrace your nation, in depriving it, as far as lies in your power, of that respectable order and decorum of manners which have been transmitted to you from your ancestors? Why do not you cease to be a member of that society, against whose good order you are a declared enemy: not only by breaking through it in your own person, but by setting a bad example to others. The contagion of this example may spread itself through a multitude of inconsiderate youth, seduced by those wretched women, who will become more enterprizing from Leonora's success? How will you answer it to your country, that may justly reproach you, as an unworthy and unnatural child, flying in the face of an indulgent parent? What answer can you make, when you are reproached for diffusing a meanness of spirit among others of the same rank, by your defection from that exalted sense of dignity, which you are bound to cherish? What reply will you make to the complaints of those desolated or divided families, who may justly accuse you of having led the dishonourable way to their destruction? How will

will you juſtify yourſelf even to your own family, when they aſk you, wherefore you have tarniſhed their name and honours by ſuch debaſement? That name is not yours, unleſs it was yours alone; and the diſhonour you caſt upon it will be injurious to all thoſe who bear it. They will have the daily mortification of being confounded with you and your offspring; and will thus all ſhare the puniſhment of your crime. Our family, formed to avenge every inſult that ſhould be offered it, hath not been hitherto diſhonoured; and ſhall it be ſaid that you, my brother, was born to render it conſpicuouſly infamous, both in yourſelf and in your children? Shall the Marquis of Roſelle give his children ſuch a mother as Leonora? The moſt inveterate enemy of our houſe could not wiſh to give them any other. But you owe to your children that purity of blood, which you, Sir, have derived from thoſe to whom you are indebted for a being. Depend on it, that very blood will cry out againſt you, if you mix it with ſuch as is vile and corrupted.—You ſigh at this reflection; and muſt doubtleſs ſhudder at the proſpect of thoſe unhappy children; unhappy in their birth, and ever bearing about the indelible

delible marks of proſcription, as the off-ſpring of that diſorder which is deſtructive of the very being of ſociety. They cannot fail of being conſtantly mortified with a ſenſe of their own indignity. They will find the career to honours and diſtinctions, which lies open to other families, ſhut up againſt them and their children. They will have daily cauſe to lament their birth; and to bluſh at being the offspring of ſuch a mother. The public will call them, by way of opprobrium, the children of Leonora. They will tranſmit the like diſhonour to poſterity; the mark of their diſgrace being already legibly ſtamped on the unformed features of their grand-children: And can you reflect upon this, and not prefer death to ſuch a marriage; to the miſery of being a father on ſuch terms?

Will your paſſion, your Leonora, be ſufficient to enſure your happineſs? Leonora, herſelf, brother, can never be happy. At preſent ſhe is every thing with you, becauſe ſhe is not in your poſſeſſion, and you are infatuated by the deſire of gratifying your paſſion. But were ſhe once yours, you would by degrees recover from your preſent intoxication, and daily perceive more and more wanting to your happineſs. You would per-

ceive your former ſentiments of honour revive; you would inſenſibly be awakened by the conſcientious voice of nature and probity, demanding a reſtoration of their violated prerogatives. Love alone is by no means the whole of our obligations, nor can alone conſtitute our happineſs. That paſſion is a mere illuſion, a violent and tranſitory ſtate of mind. Its ebullitions ſubſide with age; the charms, which now are ſo very ſeductive, will decay; and the time will come, in which you will condemn yourſelf more ſeverely than you will be condemned by others, and that by ſo much the more, as your repentance and remorſe will irritate you againſt yourſelf. You will then bluſh for your indiſcreet paſſion; you will mourn for a misfortune that will be irreparable; and will be glad to give up the latter part of your life to recall the former.

On what grounds do you flatter yourſelf that you ſhall continue always in love, beloved, and happy? Who hath aſſured you of this? Is it Leonora? or is it your own heart? Many fond attachments, alas! have ended in deſpair, with ſuch ſlight ſecurities!

All this time the Marquis ſtood ſilent and motionleſs. Conceiving that I had ſtaggered

his

his resolutions, therefore, I proceeded thus. I suppose (as you see) that Leonora hath all the good qualities she affects; that she sincerely entertains for you all that love and regard to which she doubtless pretends: That the illusions of the earlier part of life are never to be dissipated; that she will conduct herself like a woman born in your own rank, and educated among your own family; that she will govern your house with equal dignity and prudence; that she may prove both a faithful wife and tender mother; that she may inculcate worthy principles and delicate sentiments in the minds of your children; that she may serve them as an example, and give them an education she hath not received: I suppose that — And I suppose (cried the Marquis, interrupting me with great vehemence) that a sister, who loves her brother, should pity his errors, and not insult him; I suppose farther, the Marquis de Roselle is a better judge of what is necessary to his happiness than the Countess de St. Sever; and that, being free and independent, he is master to dispose of himself, as he shall think proper, in spite of those who may oppose him. Having said this, he hastily turned away, and was going to leave the room. I

ran after him to ſtop his going; my dear brother, ſaid I—I have no ſiſter, replied he, making an effort to diſengage himſelf from me; which he did. Greatly agitated, "Spirit of my Father," cried I, "My dear Mother! aſſiſt me in this terrible conflict!" At the mention of theſe ſacred names, he trembled and ſtopt; permitting me to lead him back to a ſopha. Here I ſtood up before him, while he leaned back, with his eyes ſhut, and in the moſt affecting emotions. Hitherto the warmth of my zeal had ſupported my ſpirits, and elevated me above myſelf; I was inſenſible and ſevere; not thinking how much he ſuffered by my diſcourſe, but attending only to the effect it had on the reſolution he had hinted. It was not then my buſineſs to pity him, but to alarm, and, if poſſible, to work a change on his heart. I thundered out my remonſtrances, and expreſſed the indignation I felt, without mercy. But now tenderneſs and ſenſibility retook poſſeſſion of my heart. I began to be again alarmed for the health of this unhappy brother, and, under this apprehenſion, burſt into a flood of tears; bathing one of his hands, which I tremblingly preſſed in mine. On this he opened his eyes, and

gave

gave me a look that tenderly reproached me for forgetting his infirm ſituation, and ſtrongly ſollicited my compaſſion. Mixing his tears with mine, O, ſiſter! ſiſter! ſaid he.—Alas, my brother! ſaid I, forgive my cruelty; I am yet your ſiſter.—Yes, you are, replied he, in a faultering voice; forgive me, and I am ſtill your brother. We recovered our ſpirits by degrees, and I thought I perceived a ray of ſerenity on his countenance; when, addreſſing me in a pathetic manner, and moving tone of voice, capable of affecting the moſt inſenſible heart, My dear ſiſter, ſaid he, I am afraid I have ſaid ſomething to you which I ought not; if it be ſo, continued he, putting on a ſmile both of affection and tenderneſs, our tears have effaced its remembrance. You have been witneſs of the exceſs of my paſſion for — (here he pauſed, forbearing to mention the name of Leonora.) You are ſufficiently apprized of my deſign; you have oppoſed it as became you; but you argue with a man in love, who cannot be perſuaded. I made no anſwer to your remonſtrances; but I felt, notwithſtanding, that my heart had ſomething to ſay. I could not bring it out, indeed; it probably would not have been ſatisfactory to you; tho' it ap-

pears to me unanſwerable. Pardon me, my dear ſiſter, but I cannot change my reſolution; all that I can do for you is, not to put my deſign into execution ſo ſoon as I intended. I ſhall think upon every thing you have ſaid to me; and give you my word of honour, that I ſhall take no ſtep in this affair, without giving you previous information. Are you ſatisfied with this? I think it is gaining a good deal upon me. You, ſiſter, who are my friend, and wiſh my happineſs, ſhould, in your turn, do ſomething for your brother. Be indulgent enough to put yourſelf in my place; conceive, if poſſible, the diſtreſs of my ſituation, and perhaps, added he, in a plaintive tone, you will conſent to my happineſs.

The tears ſtood in his eyes when he had done ſpeaking; and I replied to what he had ſaid in the moſt affectionate manner: I thanked him for the promiſe he had made me; and we tenderly embraced each other. The Count de St. Sever, entering ſoon after, put an end to this affecting converſation.

What, my dear friend, have I not to fear? What have I to hope? It is ſomething that we have gained time: but he is ſo taken, ſo faſcinated with this creature, that all is loſt, unleſs

unleſs we find means either to undeceive him with regard to her pretended virtue, or take more rigorous meaſures. — But theſe would be dreadful; as they would certainly be fatal to his health. To loſe his honour, or his life! What an alternative! O, ſupport me! give me, at leaſt, ſome conſolation by your advice. My regard for him is ſuch, that, if he ſhould take the opportunity when my heart is entirely devoted to friendſhip, I feel I ſhall not be able to refuſe my conſent. How ardently do I wiſh, that poverty and obſcurity of birth were all the objections to be made to the object of his paſſion! I would go, find her, and myſelf give her hand to my brother. I reſpect, indeed, the circumſtance of birth, becauſe it is an additional motive to virtue; but in fact it is only the gift of chance, often uſeleſs to our happineſs; and I am far from deſpiſing thoſe who have not this advantage. Nothing is mean in my eyes, but vice. A woman of low birth might well bear the name of my brother; were ſhe otherwiſe reſpectable by her virtue, I ſhould think her ſufficiently honoured by the name of her huſband, and would make her my friend and companion. My familiarity with her, would be a proof of her merit;

and when the public ſhould ſee her reſpected and ſupported by an honourable family, from which her birth ſeemed to have excluded her, they would not dare to entertain a diſreſpect for her, nor would they long cenſure her brother. But an infamous profeſſion! A ſcandalous life! No, my dear Counteſs, I ſhould be the baſeſt of women if I ſhould conſent to ſuch an union. Adviſe, conſole, aſſiſt me; for, indeed, I ſtand in need of advice, conſolation, and aſſiſtance.

LETTER LIX.

From Madam de Narton *to Madam* de Saint-Sever.

Varennes, Mar. 20.

WHAT advice, what counſel can I give my friend, which her own ſenſibility and diſcretion will not readily ſuggeſt? Your own heart, my dear Counteſs, will be, as it hitherto hath been, your beſt guide and director. But I ſee that your remonſtrances, however rational and juſt, will but ſlightly affect the reſolution of your unhappy brother, whoſe paſſion hath blinded his underſtanding. The tenderneſs you diſplayed towards him; that pathetic ſtroke, which drew tears from

from my eyes in the perusal of your letter; your calling to his remembrance the venerable idea of his dead parents; this alone prevailed on him to hear you, and obtained his promise of delaying his intended marriage.

Persevere, my dear friend, in giving him the strongest proofs of your love and friendship; let him see that you are ready to second, nay, to anticipate, his wishes in regard to what is just, reasonable, and decent; but let him, at the same time, perceive, through your tendereſt caresses, an unalterable firmness of resolution to oppose what is not so. Avoid, as much as possible, every thing that may turn the conversation on this fatal subject. Let him read in your looks, in your whole countenance, that you feel a kind of horror at hearing the very name of Leonora. You cannot say more to him than you have already said. To repeat it, will serve only to weaken the force of its impression on his mind; and your altercations may not always end so tenderly as the last. If once he should harbour resentment, all is lost. Adieu, my dear friend, you are sensible there is no person in the world, who partakes of your afflictions so much as myself.

LET-

LETTER LX.

From the Countess de St. Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, March 25.

I Write to you, my dear friend, amidst the utmost uneasiness and distress. Mr. de St. Sever hath entirely undone us. He went yesterday, without consulting me, or saying any thing of his intention, to the house of Leonora; whom he treated with great severity, ending his menaces with that of having her confined. In the evening, he told me of this rash adventure; and, seeing I was greatly displeased with so unadvised and precipitate a step, he grew angry; telling me that he had done it only for my sake, to put an end to my uneasiness; for that he could not bear to see me under such constant fears and apprehensions, and that the only way to cure my brother of his extravagant passion was to remove the object of it. The mischief being done, my dear, it was useless to remonstrate; I therefore said little; but I foresaw what hath since happened. My brother hath left us — Good God: what a rage! I still tremble at the thoughts of it. Having heard from that creature, of my husband's

husband's menaces, he flew into the most violent passion; and, had I not been present, might have proceeded to the greatest extremities. Mr. de St. Sever was determined to tell him all he thought and knew of Leonora; but my brother returned him only a look of indignation; till he pushed the matter so far, as to ask him ironically, if he was not making the proper preparations for his marriage? At this, the Marquis interrupted his railing, and told him, in the greatest fury, that he had no measures to keep with us any longer; that his resolution was taken; that he would set Leonora above our insults, by making her his wife; the preparations, added he, shall not be tedious; nor will I be accountable for my conduct to any but myself. The tears which stood in my eyes, and now burst forth in abundance, appeared greatly to affect him; while looking at me with great emotion he advanced a step or two towards me; but, stopping short and turning suddenly about, he flung out of the room, leaving me in the greatest distress and affliction. O, my dear friend, how shall I be able to support such repeated misfortunes!

LET-

LETTER LXI.

From the Marquis de Roſelle *to the Counteſs* de Saint-Sever.

Paris, Mar. 27.

I Cannot bear the reflection, my dear ſiſter, of giving you ſo much diſquietude. I know your heart, and am ſenſible you could not give into the inſolent project of your huſband. The effect of your tears may convince you, that you are dear to me. I would have given my blood to have ſtopped them, and cannot forgive myſelf for cauſing them to flow. Had the violence of my temper permitted me to reflect, you ſhould not have been witneſs of ſo mortifying a ſcene. I love you, my dear ſiſter, and am ſenſible both of the obligations I owe you, and of what you have a right to expect of me. When the heart ſpeaks, duty may be ſilent. But wherefore ſhould Mr. de St. Sever abuſe that tenderneſs which I have for you, and the aſcendant which he knows you have over me? By what right? By what authority, doth he take upon him thus to inſult me? Think not, dear ſiſter, that I ſuffer leſs than you; my greateſt affliction is, that I am forced

to

to renounce the pleasure of seeing you. My affectionate friend will compassionate her unhappy brother; but let her not condemn an invincible passion. Believe me, the object of it is really virtuous. Let me still possess a place in your affections; forgive those transports which I detest, and ought to have concealed from you; and entertain not the sentiments of your husband. Permit me to renew the assurances of my tenderest friendship.

LETTER LXII.

From Madam de St. Sever *to the Marquis.*

Paris, March 27.

RENOUNCE the sight of me! O, my brother! Is it possible? Alas, I shall never survive your putting such a resolve in execution. No. You must not, will not, do it. Let your affection for me, and in me for those dear parents we have lost, excite in you all those tender sentiments you feel for both. Is it impossible for you to forgive my husband, his zeal to serve you? This may be too impetuous and mistaken, but his goodwill is his only crime. He is sensible, my dear brother, that he hath no right, no authority

thority over you, but those of affection. He desires no other; nor interests himself in your affairs, in any other light, than as a friend and brother. I long most ardently to see you; and, if I did not fear to be importunate, would fly to you, with my husband; our regret, our tears, our affection should efface the remembrance of what is past, and confirm anew the sincerity of our love and friendship. — Let me entreat of you then, my dear brother, not to deprive us of your company.

LETTER LXIII.

From the Marquis to Madam de St. Sever.

Paris, March 28.

IT is impossible, my dear sister, to withstand your affectionate sollicitations; but it is equally impossible for me to consent to see your husband. He will probably be as willing also to avoid me. If you would be alone this evening — Promise me this, and I will be with you by seven o'clock. I shall not be able to stay above a minute; but it will be sufficient that I shall have seen you, and renewed the assurances of eternal friendship.

LET-

LETTER LXIV.

From the Countess to Madam de Narton.

Paris, March 29.

ALAS! my dear, we have now no resource! I had not totally lost the friendship of my brother, when, his heart relenting, he consented to re-visit me, on condition that my husband should not be present at our interview. With much difficulty I obtained, or, at least thought I had obtained, the favour of Mr. de St. Sever's absence. He promised to leave me alone, and I gave my brother the like assurance. The Count actually went out; soon after which my brother arrived, and returned my salutations with an air of the tenderest affection. After the first effusions of our hearts, he insisted on my promise not to confine Leonora, or use any violence towards her; as in such a case, he should think himself disengaged from the promise he had made me, not to hasten his marriage. I was going to reply, when Mr. de St. Sever unexpectedly entered the room; with a look of gaiety mixed with severity. My surprize could not persuade my brother that I had not combined with my husband to deceive him. One look, which he gave me

as

as he rose up to go out, was sufficient to convince me what passed in his mind. Mr. de St. Sever stopped him, and told him, he was extremely astonished that he should desire him, on any occasion, to go out of his own house; that he was not accustomed to such kind of behaviour; that what he had been induced to say to him, was always for his good; that he would never cease to put him in mind of the ruin he was going to plunge himself into; that his honour obliged him to endeavour to stop the progress of a destructive passion; that he would, at all hazards, prevent the dishonour of his family, nor suffer his brother-in-law to conclude so abominable a marriage: I will certainly shut up that creature, said he, and, if it be necessary, prevent even your seeing her. Your sister hath spoilt you, my good friend; but depend on it I will not. All this was uttered with so much volubility, that it was impossible to interrupt his harangue, had my brother even deigned to reply. This, however, he did not; but, with a calm and disdainful air, turning about to me, said, Are these your promises, Madam? Adieu. — I endeavoured to stop him, but he threw me from him with indignation, and left the room without hearing

what

what I had to ſay. It is now all over, and I ſhall certainly ſee him no more; nay, his deteſtable union with that creature will probably take place immediately. I will not tire you with melancholy reflections; but how much am I to be pitied! We have now no other means than thoſe of violence; unhappy, weak reſource! For is not my brother his own maſter? If his reſolution be actually fixed, we can only prevent his doing that immediately, which he will certainly do ſometime hereafter. Add to this, that I know not what right we have to deprive any member of ſociety of his liberty? Am I more prudent or powerful than the laws? I have ſent for Mr. de Ferval, to inform him of what has happened. I have no hopes but in him; and even in him, alas! how weak are my preſent hopes! I was never ſo diſcouraged and dejected. Adieu.

LETTER LXV.

From Mr. de Ferval *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, April 3.

OUR fears, Madam, have never been ſo great, nor ſo well-founded as at preſent. The Marquis conceives himſelf entirely diſ-

engaged from the promiſe he made the Counteſs his ſiſter. The apprehenſions he was under of Leonora's confinement, and perhaps her own fears of ſuch an event, have not only induced him to conceal her, in the houſe of ſome confident; but to haſten his marriage. I am informed of the Notary who is to ſign the contract this very evening. Having a watchful eye on his conduct, I find every thing is ready.—

I have this moment received the packet I expected, containing Leonora's letters. Adieu, Madam; I fly to this unhappy, deluded youth, in hopes of timely ſnatching from his eyes that fatal bandage which now covers them.

LETTER LXVI.

From the Marquis de Roſelle *to Madam* de Saint-Sever.

Paris, April 4, *one o' clock in the morning.*

CAN you deign, Madam, to honour me with the name of brother, the vileſt, the moſt abandoned of men? One who hath imbrued his hands in the blood of his friend —of your friend, the excellent Ferval. But

But my death only can expiate so detestable a crime. The Surgeons, indeed, tell me, his wound is not mortal. I am at present at his own apartments with him. Haste, my dear sister, to compose my agitated mind, and to preserve a friend who hath sacrificed all concerns for his own life, to the preservation of mine. Good Heaven! could nothing less than the blood of such a friend wash off the horrid stains of my execrable passion? not less detestable now than the object which inspired it; tho' in detesting her I must abhor myself.

LETTER LXVII.

From the Countess de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, April 4.

OH! my dear friend! to what a crisis have affairs been brought! How shall I inform you; how inform Madam de Ferval, that her deserving son hath narrowly escaped falling a victim to the mistaken fury of my unhappy brother? But, thanks to Heaven! Providence hath saved the life of our amiable friend, our generous benefactor; who is now out of danger. It is proper I should

give you this assurance before I begin the shocking relation. I ought to acquaint you also, for the honour, and in justification, of the unfortunate Marquis, that it is from him I have received information of those mortifying circumstances I am about to relate. Ferval would have concealed them from me, and, indeed, knows nothing of my brother's imparting them to me.

About eight o'clock last night, Mr. de Ferval went to the Marquis's house; and, notwithstanding the domestics had strict orders to admit nobody, went in; he found my brother, Leonora, and two other persons, with a Notary preparing a contract of marriage for immediate signature. The Marquis immediately took fire at the indiscreet intrusion, as he called it, of our friend; and was in a rage when he found his intention was to prevent signing the contract. By what authority, Sir, said he, in a menacing tone, have you entered here, contrary to my orders? and what right have you to controul my actions? Be gone, Sir, immediately, or— I beg, Marquis, said Ferval, only one quarter of an hour. Shall we withdraw into another apartment? When our short conversation is ended, you will be at liberty to act

as

as you pleaſe. — Yes, yes, returned my brother, glowing with rage, we will withdraw. I muſt have ſatisfaction for this infolent proceeding. I am very ready to give it you, Sir, anſwered Ferval, in a mild and gentle tone; pleaſe to peruſe the letters contained in this packet. — No, Sir, I will read nothing, I will hear nothing, till I have had ſatisfaction: follow me. At this, Leonora was very uneaſy, and would have detained him: Give me the packet, Sir, ſaid ſhe to Ferval; if it be ſo important for the Marquis to read it, I will prevail on him; you may truſt it ſafely in my hands: pray, Sir, retire: and you, Sir, too, if you pleaſe, ſaid ſhe to the Notary. We will wait the iſſue of this eclairciſſement, which Mr. de Ferval conceives to be ſo neceſſary, and could not be delayed to another opportunity. Ferval refuſed to truſt her with the packet; on which the Marquis ſnatched it out of his hands, and threw it into the fire. Ferval was quick enough to take it out again unburnt: the Notary would have retired, but the Marquis prevented him, and took Ferval into the garden; where my brother, clapping his hand to his ſword, bid him defend himſelf. Ferval was of courſe obliged to draw;

he put by ſeveral paſſes made at him by the Marquis, but at length received a thruſt on the breaſt. He fell, and the blood, which flowed in great abundance, ſoon extinguiſhed my brother's fury: he endeavoured to raiſe up his friend, and called in aſſiſtance. But what was his aſtoniſhment when he perceived that the ſword of Ferval, which laid upon the ground, had ſeveral inches of it broken off at the point. What a weapon is this? Why did you not acquaint me of this circumſtance? — I foreſaw your violence, anſwered Ferval in a feeble tone of voice, and took this precaution, my dear Roſelle, to prevent the misfortune of taking your life. My deſign was not to offend, much leſs to hurt you; I came only to prevent, if poſſible, your ſhame and ruin. It is not yet too late; the ſincerity of my friendſhip, which now is paſt diſpute, that blood which you have ſhed, and the life I have ſacrificed to you, demand at leaſt that you will peruſe the contents of this packet. Alas! my dear friend, replied my brother, I can at preſent think of nothing but your ſafety. A ſurgeon now arriving, he dreſſed the wound, and the patient was conveyed to my brother's own apartment. The ſituation of the Marquis

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was at this inſtant as terrible as that of his friend, whoſe wound was not mortal; his weakneſs ariſing only from his loſs of blood. The ſurgeon, indeed, aſſured him, that he would be well again in a week. After the firſt agitation of ſpirits, which this accident occaſioned, was over, Ferval inſiſted again that the Marquis ſhould open and read the packet. It contained the letters of Leonora to Juliet, a creature of the ſame ſtamp, in which the former had diſcloſed to the latter, the deſign and circumſtances of her vile intrigue. I have here ſent you copies of them. Thunder-ſtruck at the peruſal of theſe infamous billets, my brother threw them down with horror on the table; taking large ſtrides acroſs the room, with rage and fury ſparkling in his eyes. The ſight of his friend, who lay on the bed, and offered him his hand, made him recollect himſelf. What ſhame! cried he, what mortification is this! —He ſat down immediately to write to me; begging I would come to him. On the receipt of his note I did ſo; and found him in this diſtreſsful ſituation. Ferval would have concealed his own diſtreſs from my knowledge. No, no, my friend, ſaid the Marquis, let me at leaſt expiate my fault, by

confessing the whole to my sister. Ferval again interrupted him, when the Surgeon gave us to understand, that our conversation might too much affect the patient. We withdrew, therefore, to another apartment, where my brother, with many interruptions of sighs and tears, gave me an imperfect relation of the affair. Returning into Ferval's apartment, he gave me the letters, which I read, and returned them in silence. Well, sister, said he, am I sufficiently mortified? Are you fully avenged? I rose up and embraced him, mingling tears with his; but spoke not a word. After about a quarter of an hour thus passed away in the silent agitations of alternate resentment and tenderness, the Marquis rose up, and cried out with a resolute and determined air, My dear Ferval, it is a piece of justice which I owe to your friendship, to my sister's love, and even to myself, to take ample vengeance on this infamous woman. I will wash off my sword, with her blood, the stains it hath received from yours. Nay, hold, said Ferval, she is by no means worthy of your resentment. Endeavour, my friend, to forget this unhappy amour; this is the only vengeance you ought to take of so base a creature. Reflect, that any signal

mark

mark of your anger, will only caſt diſhonour on yourſelf. On my part, I preſſed him in my arms, and conjured him not to leave us: when, after many ſtruggles with himſelf, he determined to write a note to her; a copy of which alſo I have incloſed with the other letters. On the receipt of this note, the wretched woman left the houſe immediately, giving herſelf an air of inſolence before the ſervants, and went home. We left Ferval about ſix o'clock in the morning, the Marquis going home with me. Being then a little more tranquil, he began and related a-new the circumſtances of this cruel adventure. I ſtaid with him till eight, when I went to Mr. St. Sever, whom I adviſed of the affair, ſo that I doubt not the Marquis will have reaſon to be ſatisfied with his future behaviour. At preſent, my brother is retired to reſt. Having juſt ſent to Ferval, I find he is alſo as well as can be expected; we ſhall go and ſee him again in two hours. Adieu, my dear friend, what terrible ſhocks are theſe! and how diſtreſsful muſt they prove to Madam de Ferval. Thank Heaven, however, which conducts every thing for the beſt, ſhe hath nothing to fear on the part of her ſon.

LET-

LETTER LXVIII.

From Leonora *to* Juliet.

TRULY, Juliet, I pity you ſincerely: Why would you go thus to confine yourſelf in a gloomy caſtle? It is burying yourſelf alive; it is as bad as the life of a modeſt woman; nay, it is ſtill worſe. Your tyrant, indeed, is rich: now is the time therefore to enrich yourſelf; which is all I can ſay to the matter. Bizac is gone to ſpend ſome time in the canton you live in. If you are permitted to ſee him now and then, I ſhall think your ſituation leſs deplorable. As to myſelf, my dear Juliet, I have got a new lover; the Marquis of Roſelle, an officer in the guards. He is not more than twenty years of age, is a fine figure, and has a conſiderable fortune. I became firſt acquainted with him, by means of one Mr. de Valville, whom you may poſſibly remember; he is a fine ſubject, raw, unexperienced, and romantic. We have now been acquainted about a month; during which time he hath made me ſeveral magnificent preſents, and hath preſſed for nothing in return. He will attain his happineſs, he ſays, by degrees. I take great

pains,

pains, you may be ſure, to cheriſh this very reſpectful paſſion; and aſſure you that I play my part to the life, with dignity, ſentiment, delicacy, and all that; and, on my word, it is really diverting. Beſides, ſuch a lover may be the means of making one's fortune. He is generous to extremes; and the diſtance, at which I keep him, will long maintain the fervour of his paſſion. Nothing can be more pleaſant than to obſerve our behaviour; he treating me with the deference due to a princeſs, and I him with that gracious condeſcenſion due to her fond admirer. Don't conclude from this, however, that he wants underſtanding: on the contrary, he hath a good deal; but his delicacy and ſuſceptibility are greater; and, what adds to all, I am his firſt love. You will judge, my dear, what a fine hand may be made of a man ſo unexperienced in the arts of intrigue. My old keeper, La Roche, knows nothing of the matter; but you know how I manage him. We need only aſſume at firſt a proper authority over theſe animals. Indeed, ſince that old hypocrite hath been in fear of his amours being diſcovered, he makes a very prudent and diſcreet lover. I have diſmiſſed all my other danglers, whoſe attendance could be of

no

no use, and would serve only to hurt me. And if you consider, I have full enough on my hands. On the one side I have the Marquis, in whose opinion I must take care to preserve for me the proper respect; and on the other, I have the management of La Roche. To receive both, and prevent their ever meeting; to suit one's disposition to those of men so totally different, to amuse each in his own way, and be alternately agreeable to both; to be grave and decent with one; lively, capricious, and wanton with the other. I have certainly enough to do. But I doubt not that I shall acquit myself successfully: And so, my dear Juliet, adieu.

LETTER LXIX.

From Leonora *to* Juliet *.

Paris, Jan. 7.

YOU know, my dear, what a horrible fright I have been put into, by that barbarous De la Roche: it is, however, no matter, as it seems to have given things a

* Several Letters, it seems, passed between Leonora and Juliet, that are not in this Collection.

turn

turn for the better, by having augmented the Marquis's paſſion. You will ſay, doubtleſs, that I am an artful creature. And I muſt confeſs, my talents were put to the teſt at this critical juncture; my addreſs, however, hath ſucceeded. Do you know alſo, that this amour is likely to become a very ſerious affair? I would give a good deal that Bizac could come to Paris. He would be very uſeful to me; endeavour, if you can, to ſend him. He would play the part of a Rival moſt admirably; a part that would be neceſſary to give an additional whet to the paſſion of my young lover; who is, nevertheleſs, ſtill more enamoured, if poſſible, than ever. His deſires are reſtrained only by his reſpect; but I ſee how ſeverely this reſtraint is felt. I ſhall endeavour to compleat my conqueſt, by diſplaying a ſpecimen or two of my virtue. You will ſmile at this; but I aſſure you, I will lead him a fine dance. I have already refuſed many of his preſents, and theſe refuſals have brought additional ones, which I would not receive till they were forced upon me. A few pretenſions to generoſity, artfully diſplayed, prudence without ſeverity, and ſome fine touches of ſeeming paſſion, without its weakneſs, will effectually ſubdue him,

him. If Bizac cannot come, ſay nothing to him of the matter. You know that confidents are dangerous. Farewel.

LETTER LXX.

From Leonora *to* Juliet.

Paris, Jan. 14.

MY young Marquis, my dear, hath more difficulties to ſtruggle with than I imagined. A religious ſiſter, a title, and family-diſtinctions, form terrible obſtacles to my project. Theſe extraordinary machines, therefore, muſt be artfully put in motion. Incloſed you have the copy of a letter *, which I would have you tranſcribe exactly and carefully with your own hand. You will then direct it to me, and ſend it by the poſt, after having given me previous advice of the day it will arrive at Paris; in order that I may plant my batteries, and lay the train accordingly. You underſtand what I mean, nor need I put an affront on your ſagacity by any farther explication of my deſign. Adieu.

* This was the copy of that letter which the Marquis found in Leonora's ſcrutore.

LET-

LETTER LXXI.

From Leonora *to* Juliet.

Paris, Feb. 15.

THE letter, my dear, hath produced the intended effect; and yet my Marquis hath not as yet totally ſurrendered himſelf. I have quitted the Opera. I know I run a great riſque in doing of this; but there are occaſions on which ſome riſque muſt be run. So long as I ſhould remain an actreſs, he would never marry me. — Cannot you come hither? You might be very uſeful to me. It would be proper for me to appear at leaſt a woman of honeſt parentage; a relation or ſo, living in the country, and acquainted with my misfortunes and virtues, coming up to take me out of a certain way of life, would have a good look with it. You take me, Juliet. Endeavour, if poſſible, to do me this piece of ſervice. You know that the making of my fortune will alſo make yours; for when I am a woman of quality, you ſhall be my beſt friend, my relation, whom I ſhall take care to raiſe into a proper eſteem and conſideration. I do aſſure you, that when I get rank, I ſhall take upon me all the airs of it. Nay, I don't know whether I may not become

become a woman of virtue in good earneſt. Thoſe that are, would certainly never have been ſo, had they experienced our temptations and neceſſities. Virtue depends altogether on circumſtances. Yes, I ſhould certainly endeavour to be virtuous, till I grew tired of it. And you, perhaps, would be ſo too. Ha! ha! ha! I can but think of the drollery of ſuch a metamorphoſis.

LETTER LXXII.

From Leonora *to* Juliet.

Paris, March 1.

IF you cannot get away from your tyrannical lover in leſs than a week, I hope my lot will be decided before your arrival. I have ſet all my ſprings to work, have awakened all the deſires of my young Marquis, and even brought him ſo far as to offer a private marriage; which I have refuſed. You will think me very daring; but he muſt give me the name and rank of Marchioneſs de Roſelle. I will not bate an inch of it. I have but one more card to play, and then this fortunate affair will be compleated.—

I juſt now learn that he is very ill.—What an unlucky accident! If he ſhould happen

happen to die, I shall have done a very foolish thing in quitting the Opera. And if he recovers, I may possibly get little by it, as he will of course be surrounded by his family, and I shall be deprived of the opportunity of repairing the fault I have committed, by my too precipitate conduct. I was indeed in too great a hurry; but who could foresee such an accident? It was very wrong in me to refuse the private marriage he offered; as he would have given me two thirds of his estate. I have made here a sad blunder, indeed! Heaven grant he may recover, and get out of the hands of his relations, that I may go to work with him again! Adieu.

LETTER LXXIII.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Paris, April 4.

VILE and deceitful woman! What words can describe the horror I feel at the detection of your baseness and villainy! Good God! is it possible that I could ever be going to sacrifice my honour, my family, my very being, to such a monster. I have read the letters you wrote to your despicable confident, Juliet. I see now all

the ſprings you have had in play to impoſe on my underſtanding. — What! when I was in the very agonies of death; when my unhappy paſſion had brought me to the brink of the grave! couldſt thou at that time regret only the loſs of my fortune? Horrid monſter! begone for ever from my ſight; I cannot contain my reſentment: I will revenge upon you the wounds of my friend. Was it for thee, thou miſerable wretch, that I could ſhed his precious blood! You may keep the preſents I have made you, as tokens of your own infamy and my weakneſs; but of all things, be careful to avoid my ſight. I forbid you to make any reply; the ſight of your hand-writing would even fill me with horror. —

LETTER LXXIV.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, April 11.

MR. de Ferval is perfectly recovered, his ſtrength increaſing daily, and nothing being left of his wound but a ſlight ſcar, the honourable proof of the nobleſt ſentiments. It is in the heart of my brother that

that this affair will leave a painful and lasting wound. How deservedly is he to be pitied! To his apprehensions for poor Ferval, succeeded the joy of his recovery. The mixture of horror, repentance, and gratitude, which agitated his mind for the two first days, was less terrible, than that dejection and gloom of melancholy, into which I see him now plunged. He is always at our house, where Ferval came yesterday for the first time. It is not easy to conceive what pains our deserving friend took to suppress every idea relative to his wound. The civilities he paid my brother were uncommonly tender. He proposed numerous projects of amusement, and entertained us with news and little interesting and agreeable topics. Mr. de St. Sever came in, and would have talked to him of his situation and health, at which I observed Ferval to blush extremely. By the most agreeable address, he prevailed on him to change the subject of discourse. My brother sighed, and could not refrain from shedding tears; going out of the room and returning several times. These terrible shocks really make me apprehensive for his life, especially as his health is as yet not perfectly restored. It is necessary that he should have

some amusement; but as to pleasure, it will be some time before he is capable of its enjoyment. I learn that Leonora is gone to lodge in a distant part of the town, having taken with her all her moveables, with the presents my brother gave her. Would to Heaven we may hear no more of her! The Marquis never enquires after her, nor hath even mentioned her name these four days. Adieu, my dear friend. I must return to this dear object of my concern and affection. How shall I express to Madam de Ferval the sense of the obligation I am under to her and hers! Be to her the interpreter of that heart with whose emotions you are so well acquainted.

LETTER LXXV.

From Mr. de Ferval *to Miss* de Ferval.

Paris, April 20.

YOU are acquainted, my dear sister, with what hath lately passed, in consequence of which I am under the most terrible embarrassment. The success of my endeavours hath, indeed, well recompensed me for the pains I have taken. But you know not, nor indeed have I told any one, that to get possession

ſeſſion of Leonora's letters I was obliged to pay for them. The purchaſe of them, indeed, was owing to the inſolence and imprudence of Leonora; for without that I ſhould never have obtained them; having an invincible repugnance to corrupt any one's ſervants ſo far as this. On this head I needed not the advice my mother gave me, in one of her letters; my heart alone would have dictated the like counſel. Luckily, however, Juliet, being preſſed for money, applied to Leonora; from whom ſhe received no very polite refuſal. Leonora behaved to her indeed as if ſhe had been already the Marchioneſs de Roſelle. Enraged at this refuſal, and under a preſſing neceſſity for money, Juliet liſtened to the inſinuations of Leonora's woman; and, in order not to be obliged to diſpoſe of her moveables, offered me the letters in queſtion. Three hundred guineas was the price of them. I had not that ſum by me, and did not chuſe to apply to Madam de St. Sever, for reaſons I need not tell you. It was neceſſary, therefore, to borrow them. I had not time to make much choice in the lender, but addreſſed myſelf to La Roche; of whoſe intrigue and reſentment you have heard. His anger, which ſtill continued, ſtood me

in good ſtead; knowing the uſe to which it was to be applied, he lent it me without intereſt. But as he is no leſs covetous than revengeful, he is very preſſing for the repayment. I think I ought not to inform Mr. de St. Sever of this circumſtance; nor, indeed, could I take upon myſelf to ſpeak to him on the ſubject. Ought I to ſpeak of it to my mother? You know what repugnance ſhe expreſſed at my employing ſuch means. But could I poſſibly do otherwiſe? She muſt know of it. — Adviſe me, my dear ſiſter, what to do, in order to extricate myſelf from this difficulty. You will oblige me by a ſpeedy reply. Adieu.

LETTER LXXVI.

From Miſs de Ferval *to her Brother.*

Ferval, April 23.

THE cauſe of your embarraſſment, my dear brother, is ſo honourable for you, that I cannot forbear partaking of it from the bottom of my heart. You have acted the part of an hero, and, what affects me ſtill more, that of a friend. You ought by no means to mention this affair, either to the Count or Counteſs de St. Sever. I am not

insensible, that, on the first view of this matter, they ought rather to repay this money than you: but there are some actions which, however just, are disreputable, and such I think an application to them would appear: for you ought not in any case to dispose of the money of others without their consent. I am also against speaking of it to my mother. I well know what her heart would readily dictate; but she is by no means in circumstances to be generous. The mediocrity of her fortune, the expences she is at, for you and for her family, which she maintains in a reputable manner, are sufficient motives for œconomy. I know perfectly well the state of her affairs, as I am frequently both her book and cash-keeper, and I know she cannot furnish you with that money, without putting herself to great inconveniences. It would be wrong, therefore, to give her any uneasiness about it: but tomorrow I will send you, privately, and by a safe hand, my diamond ear-rings. They are my own, as my aunt gave them to me on her death-bed; so that I may dispose of them as I please. I shall endeavour to prevent their being missed; but if it should so happen that my mother should ask me after them, I shall

tell her to what use I have put them; and I am certain she will not blame me. Return me no thanks for this gift; as I make it with the greatest pleasure, in that the motive which reduces you to the want of it, is truly excellent. Indeed, I glory in being your sister. I cannot forbear observing, however, that the means you have employed were a little hazardous, and were such as it is very disagreeable to have recourse to. But you say it was necessary; and I can only lament that necessity. What a monster is Vice, that sometimes compells even Virtue itself to make use of her artifices! Adieu, my dear brother, I am very sensible of the confidence you place in me. The sollicitude and admiration you have lately excited in me, have been productive of the most impatient desire once more to see and embrace you.

I cannot, however, conceal my apprehensions on your account from Leonora's resentment: minds so debased as hers are capable of any thing.

LETTER LXXVII.

From Mr. de Ferval *to his Sister.*

Paris, April 28.

WHAT goodness, what prudence, my dear sister, have you not shewn, in the sacrifice you have made me! I received the ear-rings safe, and have sold them. But though I have discharged the debt, my uneasiness at depriving you of them still remains. To possess a sensibility, a generosity of soul, without a fortune, is honourable; but it is nevertheless afflicting. Be not under any uneasiness about Leonora; revenge is too elevated a passion for a mind like hers. The Marquis, who has taken a melancholy turn, which much affects me, wrote yesterday to Valville. I am sorry; as I have cause to think, that, unworthy as Valville is to be the friend of Roselle, the differences which have happened between them, and are now compromising, will unite them more closely than ever. I pity the unfortunate Marquis; who seeks to attach himself to some object, in order to fill up that vacancy he must necessarily feel in his heart, from the expulsion of Leonora.

I em-

I embrace you, my ſiſter, my friend; be aſſured of my affection, and accept my acknowledgments.

LETTER LXXVIII.

From the Marquis to Valville.

Paris, April 27.

WILL you then, my dear Valville, abandon me? After ſo great a puniſhment and humiliation as I have undergone, your diſpleaſure muſt ſurely ſubſide. I acknowledge my errors, I abjure them; and intreat your pardon. How unhappy am I? I now perceive the vile object of my paſſion, which has been the ſource of ſo much trouble, was unworthy of it. I deteſt it, but my heart ſtill bleeds. Come, my dear friend, and reſtore to me that ſtrength which I have loſt. I have great hopes from your aſſiſtance, of which I ſtand in the utmoſt need.

LETTER LXXIX.

From Valville *to the Marquis.*

Paris, April 27.

I Thought, my dear Marquis, that this flight of yours would not hold long: I am not ſorry for the experiment you have tried: It will make you wiſer. You have now awaked from an extravagant dream. Forget this act of folly as ſoon as poſſible. I will come and ſee you this evening; and tomorrow I intend to introduce you to a moſt charming lady, indeed, whoſe entertainments are magnificent, and whoſe houſe is a ſcene of pleaſure; I mean, to Madam d'Aſterre. But let us hear no more of your romantic notions; if theſe are not left off, I will have nothing to ſay. Your illneſs has conſiderably affected me. Adieu; and believe yourſelf more beholden to your good fortune than to your prudence.

LET-

LETTER LXXX.

From Valville *to the Marquis.*

Paris, April 29.

I Find, my dear Marquis, you cannot keep from running into extremes, of all which, Misanthropy is the worst. I would rather see you indulge the passion of love. Yesterday I carried you to the Marchioness d'Asterre, who had the best of company, and, among them, some beauties; and you enjoyed some advantages from the Marchioness, which another person would with difficulty have obtained. Yet you made not the least return, not even a lively sentiment. Your behaviour was a cold politeness, attended with an insensibility which disconcerted me in every thing. I had told you, that you could never appear under more favourable auspices. The Marchioness is an amiable woman, and I was myself held some time in suspence between her and Madam de Clarival; but for some reasons of convenience I decided in favour of the latter, and I pique myself on constancy. I have laid it down as a maxim, that it is the greatest cruelty to deceive a woman. I can unite pleasure with hon-

our.

our. Return then to us, and to yourself, and again enter the world. I will give you a second meeting to-morrow at Madam d'Asterre's, with whom I am determined you shall form an attachment. Don't I deserve your thanks for so generously providing for you a place, which every amiable man in Paris would rejoice to obtain, and which perhaps in a few months I might wish to procure for myself? Farewel, Marquis, till to-morrow.

LETTER LXXXI.

From the Marquis to Valville.

Paris, April 30.

I Thank you, my dear friend, for the trouble you have taken, and acknowledge your friendship in the advice you give me. I would, however, wish to banish a remembrance which will embitter my whole life. I have resolved never more to speak of that unhappy, that detestable passion of which I have been the victim. I endeavour to avoid the thought of it; but this cruel effort recoils back on me with the utmost violence. I will no longer give way to love. I abhor it.

it. But how great a conflict do I ſuſtain, and how happy was I while I continued in my error! Forgive this regret for a felicity, which, though I thought it real, I find exiſts no longer. My heart, alas! was accuſtomed to this charm; but I ſeem now to be loſt in an abyſs of vacuity. Shall I venture to open my heart to you? Did not honour, did not that ſentiment to which I will ſacrifice every other, forbid me, I ſhould be ready to reſume my former bonds, and become leſs miſerable than I am at preſent. — Wretched, vile creature! I will hate her; I will deſpiſe her. — But what am I ſaying — Hatred! Contempt! — No; anger alone dictated theſe expreſſions. — Alas! Leonora! —

Thus far I had written this morning, when my emotion diſabled me from holding the pen, which dropped from my hand. I have ſince been reading it over, and am aſhamed of the inconſiſtency of it. However, it manifeſts the ſtate of my mind, for which, my dear Valville, I muſt at leaſt have your pity. What can be more mortifying, than to be obliged to hate and deſpiſe that object which we have paſſionately loved? I could almoſt imagine, that

ſelf-

ſelf-affection hath imparted freſh errors to Love, to wound my ulcerated heart. To ſay the truth, my ideas are ſo confuſed, that I know not how to ſeparate them; and you cannot conceive the different emotions with which I am diſtracted. Rage, love, ſhame, each, in its turn, ſuggeſts ſome propoſal, which, after a moment's reflection, I bluſh to think of.

Do not be under any fear of my committing any diſgraceful action. Honour will do more than reaſon, and I ſhould rather chooſe to die than ſee Leonora again. For my own ſake I am willing to baniſh her from my memory. But, notwithſtanding this, my wounds ſtill bleed; and new connections will by no means heal them. During the reſt of my life I will bid adieu to love, which the cruel experience I have had of it has rendered odious to me: If I am once free, the ladies you ſpeak of will have little influence. What are thoſe ſentiments, which you would cheriſh in me towards Madam d'Aſterre? I am a man of honour, and if ſhe is a woman of virtue, what can all your attachments mean? Her mode of life is too tumultuous for me. What could you have intended with reſpect to Madam

de

de Clarival, whose rank and behaviour imply that of a woman of character, and whose husband you are intimately acquainted with? Permit me, dear Valville, to decline this new connection. I will return to my sister's, I will keep myself at home, and, if I have sometimes your company, I shall be satisfied. I am sensible I am acting a very dull character in the world, and cannot long sustain it. Come and see me to-morrow, if you possibly can; but I must be excused from visiting Madam d'Asterre.

LETTER LXXXII.

From Valville *to the Marquis.*

Paris, April 30.

WHAT strange ideas, my dear Marquis, do you give way to? They are totally void of common sense. It is a pity; but you think differently from every one. Enjoy life once more, be happy, be tranquil, and suffer yourself to be amused. This is all that is required of you. Surely you do not know in what manner Madam d'Asterre has distinguished you, notwithstanding your reserve and coldness. She has asked me whether she should not see you again this evening; and

and from a knowledge of circumſtances, I can venture to aſſure you, that it is in your power to make a conqueſt. What gothic notions can you have to impede your progreſs? There is no doubt that Madam d'Aſterre is a woman of honour. But what then? that may not prevent her from loving a man of gallantry? I find you know not what is meant by honour in polite life. A man, who is willing to paſs his time agreeably, chooſes from among the moſt amiable women, one who will ſuit him beſt. Beauty, merit, and wit are not alone ſufficient to decide his choice; there muſt likewiſe be a concurrence of circumſtances. For inſtance: Suppoſe a huſband on whom we may rely with ſafety; ſuppoſe, too, that we can make him our friend; that there is nothing diſagreeable at home, but, on the contrary, no expences ſpared for procuring pleaſures: If then all theſe things can be found united, our next ſtep muſt be, to ſettle matters with the lady. If, after an attempt of ſome weeks, we ſhould not find our meaſures ſucceed, we muſt turn our views elſewhere; but if our affairs are proſperous, we take our arrangements accordingly. A woman ought, by all

 means,

means, to exact of her lover a decency of behaviour, a shew of regard for her husband, and as much constancy towards herself as possible; and if, after all this, the parties should, nevertheless, growtired of each other, an honourable retreat should be made, but no open rupture must ever happen; and at the worst, supposing a rupture to be unavoidable, care must even then be taken to manage it as privately, and with as little confusion as circumstances will allow. As this is the duty of a man of gallantry, so that of the woman must consist in being faithful to her lover as long as they like each other; in not having more than one object of affection at the same time; in preserving the fairest appearances; in behaving to her husband with politeness; in never attempting, with rudeness, to detach him from any favourite connection, from which he cannot without difficulty be disengaged; in avoiding even the knowledge of such connections; and, if her husband be a man who knows something of the world, in rendering her own adorers subservient to his interest. Such is the picture of an amiable woman, a woman of address and abilities, and one with whom it is worth while to be

ac-

acquainted. You cannot be ſo ignorant as not to know, that every thing now turns on pleaſure, as the grand pivot of every affair of importance, and which, if it cannot be attained, muſt at leaſt be counterfeited. Theſe are the firſt principles of ſociety in the great world. I bluſh for you, Marquis, to think where you can have lived, to have picked up ſuch antiquated notions as you entertain. It muſt certainly be in the country, for I cannot ſuſpect you have degraded yourſelf ſo much at Paris, as to viſit the clubs of mechanics. I will not be denied. I muſt this evening, by ſome means or other, get you to Madam d'Aſterre's. Rid yourſelf, therefore, of your melancholy ideas; and, till night, adieu.

LETTER LXXXIII.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, April 22.

AS you deſerve, my dear friend, every inſtance of gratitude on my part, the leaſt return I can make, is an attention to inform you of every thing. My brother continues much the ſame, and is almoſt conſtantly with me; but notwithſtanding the ſatisfaction his

presence gives me, I find he stands in need of amusements and pleasures, which I know not how to procure him. It was with the greatest difficulty I prevailed on him yesterday to accompany Mr. de Valville, who came to introduce him to a lady, who keeps the most agreeable company; and, though he at last consented to it, he returned as melancholy as he went out. His whole time passes in solitary walks, in distracting dreams, in sighs, or in silence. His health is far from being re-established, and he has a disorder at his stomach, which gives me much uneasiness. What greater tyrants can exist than our own passions? I am, however, my dear friend, very glad he did not follow my advice in one respect, in a marriage with Miss de St. Albin. Could you have thought that a lady of so sweet a disposition, so well educated, so reserved, and in whom I thought I had discovered a fund of virtue, should ever have given any uneasiness to her husband; and yet I am told, she is no longer the same person she was; that her caprice and obstinacy are insupportable; and that in her family she is an absolute tyrant. Her first proceeding was, to dismiss from the family of Baron d'Orbe every one of the old

servants,

ſervants, and in particular a poor valet-de-chambre, who had faithfully ſerved both the father and ſon for half a century, and who, thus turned away with the reſt, is deſtitute even of the means of ſubſiſtence. This was only her firſt ſtep; ſhe next quarrelled with her brother-in-law, and with a female relation of her huſband's, who is both aged and infirm, had lived in the family for twenty years, and who is now obliged to retire to a convent, though ſhe has not a ſufficiency to find herſelf in common neceſſaries. As this laſt meaſure was tranſacted during the abſence of the Baron, he could not refrain from burſting into the utmoſt rage at his return; after which he wrote to the poor woman, to excuſe his wife's behaviour, and to invite her to return; but ſhe has ſince told me herſelf, that ſhe would rather be reduced to the loweſt degree of indigence, than expoſe herſelf any more to her former mortifications; and, according to the account ſhe gave me of the Baroneſs, nothing can exceed her obſtinacy and cruelty. As ſhe gives herſelf little trouble about other people, the expences are exceſſively increaſed merely on her account; and as ſhe is perpetually at variance with all her huſband's friends,

the houſe is one continued ſcene of confuſion and diſorder. What moreover is ſtill worſe, becauſe ſhe neither plays nor frequents public places, ſhe imagines herſelf a woman of the ſublimeſt virtue; and becauſe ſhe makes a parade of not neglecting a certain form of devotions, ſhe thinks all religion centers in herſelf. I have had ſuch a deſcription of her as made me tremble, and I return thanks to Heaven that the execution of my deſigns was prevented. As I am now ſenſible how much you were in the right, nothing could give me greater pleaſure than to receive a ſiſter from your hands. But of this I muſt not at preſent venture to think.

Adieu, my dear friend, and be aſſured of my regard. Let me be remembered, I entreat of you, to Madam de Ferval and her daughters. I congratulate you on the enjoyment of ſuch agreeable company. The obligations I owe to that family, ſhall never be forgotten.

LETTER LXXXIV.

From Madam de Narton *to Madam* de Saint-Sever.

Varennes, April 25.

I Can eaſily perceive, my dear Counteſs, how great muſt be your uneaſineſs at your brother's ſituation; it is really pitiable; but though his diſorder may be of ſome continuance, I have great hopes that he will recover at laſt. Avoid laying him under any reſtraint: Liberty is now what he moſt requires. He is averſe, you tell me, to amuſements; do not offer any violence to him on that head; they would become more diſguſting, and time alone can work an alteration. Let him proceed as his inclination leads him; the experience he has had will ripen his judgment, and prevent future acts of folly. I am moſt concerned for his health, and could wiſh he was in the country, where the moſt natural recreations are to be found, and where the air will contribute greatly to his amendment.

I am extremely ſorry for the unfortunate marriage of the Baron d'Orbe; I pity him the more, as I know him to be a man of

merit: But I cannot, at the ſame time, help rejoicing, that you have been undeceived with reſpect to his lady. Indeed I have ever expected ſomething of this ſort, from the education ſhe received. That diſſimulation which is inculcated into youth, is the ſource of every vice; while a puerile, ſuperficial devotion, contracts the mind, and renders it unfit for ſociety. The portrait of this one lady, may ſerve for that of every profeſſed devotee; and the idea of ſelf-ſuperiority which they poſſeſs, generally renders their company diſagreeable. Indulging ſlander under the pretext of charity, pride under that of humility; prodigality to themſelves, avarice towards others, affectation, bitterneſs, ignorance, ſtubbornneſs, and cruelty; their character may be drawn in a few words. But from whence can theſe ill qualities ariſe? Poſſibly from a bad foundation; but were it ever ſo good, it would be ſpoilt by ſuch an education as Madam d'Orbe has received. Of that rational and ſublime piety, which is at once the ſource and perfection of every virtue, I am very certain no idea has been given her. She hath been taught betimes to conceal her faults, but no pains have been taken to eradicate them. Her mind hath never

never been properly cultivated; but superstition has taken the place of religion, and pride that of greatness of soul. Having never employed herself in reading, or in any method of obtaining knowledge, she hath confined her attention to music, her toilette, and the austerities of a convent; and having likewise been told, that, provided she assumed an air of reserve in the presence of the men, if she kept silence, if she always sat upright, and did not neglect the decorums of dress, she would be quite an accomplished woman; she therefore took all this upon trust, and married for no other purpose than to become her own mistress, and indulge her revenge for the restraint she had so long undergone. Besides, as she had so often heard it repeated, that marriage must precede love, she gave herself very little anxiety to whom her hand should be given; and indeed it was given to a man whom she had never spoken to before. This is the history of an education, of which I need not tell you the consequences: It were much to be wished such examples were more rare. If you desire your brother to be happy, never choose for him a wife thus educated; such austere precepts are not to be relied on. He is amiable; find, therefore,

some

ſome woman who is amiable alſo. Such a character may be found; though I acknowledge Fortune ſeems jealous of Nature, and generally confines her favours to thoſe of the leaſt merit and feweſt accompliſhments. May you, for the ſake of the Marquis, have the happineſs to find the advantages both of Nature and Fortune united; and, I am certain, he will not be found unworthy of them.

LETTER LXXXV.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, Jan. 18.

WHAT a lively deſcription, my dear, have you given of theſe pretended devotees; and how contemptible do they appear? Mr. d'Orbe, quite incenſed at his wife's behaviour, intends to ſend her back to a convent, which muſt be the greater mortification to him, as he always thought it was impoſſible to find a truly accompliſhed woman, except in the receſſes of a cloiſter. But groſsly as he will affront every mother who dares to take the care of her children on herſelf, I pity his error and his ſincerity. I pity him the more, as I myſelf was likewiſe deceived

deceived by the ſame perſon. The better judgment which good ſenſe and experience enabled you to form of her, has at length convinced me, that a knowledge of the world cannot be obtained without having lived in it and ſeen it. This knowledge I am not poſſeſſed of, but you are; and through you, as a medium, it may be of ſervice to me. Mr. de Valville has made a propoſal to my brother, to ſpend a few days in the country, at Madam d'Aſterre's. He at firſt declined it; but in conſequence of your advice with reſpect to the air, I have ſince prevailed on him, and he ſet out this morning. From this little excurſion, added to your care, I have great hopes of his recovery. I muſt not omit mentioning the aſſiduities of that worthy young gentleman, Mr. Ferval. From the interviews I have had with him, it appears that his affection for his mother and his ſiſters is the moſt ardent that can be conceived. It is an elogium to the whole family, who are united to each other in a manner as ſingular as it is reſpectable. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ſincerely yours.

LETTER LXXXVI.

From the Marquis to Valville.

Paris, May 3.

EXCUSE, my friend, my precipitate departure; but indeed I could not ſtay any longer. Can this be called good company? Let me aſſert, that Leonora, and thoſe on an equality with her, contemptible as they undoubtedly are, are leſs contemptible than thoſe women I have been introduced to. The former ſtand to public view, and openly proclaim themſelves to be what they are; a misfortune to thoſe who ſuffer themſelves to be deceived by them, and to me in particular, who have been ſo cruelly drawn away. But as to your women — I could not have thought your heart had been ſo debaſed as to offer them your eſteem. What! to conceal the baſeneſs of guilt under the pretence of honour, without remorſe, without a bluſh; to conſider perfidiouſneſs, nay, adultery itſelf, under the notion of politeneſs; and to have loſt the very idea of Virtue! Can a character more abominable be exiſting in Nature? I will confeſs, that curioſity, added to your efforts, was the motive which determined me

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to accompany you to Madam d'Asterre's, where I was desirous of seeing these people of fashion. I have seen them; but, so far from pleasing me, they gave me the greatest disgust. I have taken particular notice of you when engaged with Madam de Clarival; and, if I know myself, I can venture to assure you, that there is no affection either on your part or on hers. The connection which you have with her, which you mistake for love, that terrible passion which almost deprives us of the use of our reason, and in some measure renders our faults excusable, is nothing more than a complication of vanity and disorder. These *arrangements*, as you are pleased to term them, supposing them not to be criminal, are certainly the most dull and trifling ocupations which can employ the attention of a man of galliahtry. How ridiculous is it to make parade of a passion which you do not feel, and to be ever dancing attendance on a woman, whom fashion alone can prevail on you to acknowledge, but whom in fact you blush for. Time thus spent, is absolutely worse than lost. Madam de Clarival's vanity is flattered by the conquest she thinks she has made, and to outward appearance you are not inconstant: On the other hand,

hand, you find ſome conveniencies reſulting from your connection with her: But I clearly perceive, that theſe mutual advantages are reciprocally purchaſed at the dear expence of tranquillity. Nay, you have yourſelf told me, that though you could not refuſe ſuch a ſacrifice if it was demanded, it would be with reluctance you could conſent to paſs two days with her alone in a rural retirement. Conſider the word: a Sacrifice. With what propriety could you uſe this expreſſion, if you were really in love? Does not Love produce the higheſt raptures? And can Love ever be found united with indifference and fatigue? — What! do you even dread to undergo, for two days only, what a Lover would never have thought could be purchaſed at a price too dear. I muſt tell you again, you are not in love. Leave, then, this intrigue, which is not leſs criminal than diſgraceful. You have told me, that Mr. de Clarival is your friend, and that he has given proof of his friendſhip. Is this, then, the return you make him; thus to betray him, deliberately to betray him, and to commit the moſt cruel injury that can be offered him, in ſeducing his wife, whom you do not love. You muſt excuſe me, Valville, but

I cannot

I cannot think this behaviour is consistent with the character of an honest man. I am not going to make a formal declamation against vice, as I am sensible this would be of little use with respect to you. Not as a preacher, but as an inhabitant of the world, I now tell you, that no crime is more atrocious than adultery, which draws after it so many melancholy consequences; deceit, perfidy, the ruin of families, and their indelible disgrace. I will have nothing more said about Madam d'Asterre, whose advances to me were really indecent. I acknowledge it was to disengage myself from her, that I came away this morning before the family was risen. She may think of me what she pleases, but I shall be very indifferent about her opinion. I would rather appear ridiculous to her, than to be really criminal. I cannot imagine how these women have it in their power to seduce? For the wife of another man I can only conceive respect if she is worthy of it, and contempt if she is unworthy. Even if you take away the idea of the vice, which however is not a very easy matter, yet how can you possibly rely on the fidelity of her who is unfaithful to her husband? I have fallen into great errors, I allow; errors that will

will occasion bitter reflexions during my whole life: But I have, at the same time, the consolation, that I have nothing worse than errors to reproach myself with. My heart has been led astray, but it has not quite been corrupted. Let me repeat it; Leonora, the infamous Leonora, whom I ought to detest, whom perhaps I yet love, but of whom my contempt will prevent my danger, Leonora now appears less culpable. Do not ask me any more to return to Madam d'Asterre's. It is impossible for me to comply with your request. You may rely on the most inviolable secrecy, of which my own interest is a security.

LETTER LXXXVII.

From Valville *to the Marquis.*

Montesson, May 5.

IT is all over with you, Marquis: I will positively have nothing more to say to you. I can do no more. Since you have begun so gravely to preach about morality and goodness, I must give you up. Yet I cannot help thinking, it is a pity that such distinguished rank, a man of fortune, wit, and personal accomplishments, should throw himself away in this manner.

manner. I began to ſuſpect that your ridiculous paſſion, and the illneſs which followed it, had turned your brain; and the long Paſtoral Letter, (for I can give it no other name,) which you ſent me, confirmed my opinion. Let me have no more ſuch epiſtles. Sermons tire me, and therefore I ſeldom go to hear them; but your tedious letters ſurprize me into attention. I am ſorry, Marquis, for your ſituation; and the only excuſe I could make for you to Madam d'Aſterre, was an open acknowledgment of it. Don't be afraid, I ſhall give you no more invitations; you have cured me pretty well of them. You have cauſed me mortification enough, and I have been ſufficiently rallied on your account. What think you, then, if your letter had been ſhewn? Adieu. Uſe the means for your recovery; let your ideas be leſs gloomy; and accommodate your principles to the mode of the age. This ſhort leſſon is worth all you have been preaching about. *Principles*, have I ſaid? What a formal expreſſion! Surely the contagion has infected me. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

From the Marquis to Valville.

Paris, May 6.

LOVE has led me aſtray, and friendſhip would corrupt me. I ſee, Valville, you turn my reflections into ridicule. Have I aſſerted any thing that Nature hath not implanted in every heart, in yours as well as mine? Shall the renunciation of an error preclude me from returning back to myſelf, and from diſcloſing my heart to a friend? I have been guilty of faults; and the conſolation only remains, that I ſhall be more cautious for the future. Envy me not in this. In proportion as I ſaw my folly, my pleaſure increaſed, when I thought on thoſe principles and ſentiments, by which I was preſerved from greater exceſſes. With what ſatisfaction do I now reflect, that in the midſt of all my irregularities my heart continued uncorrupted, and that integrity and the love of virtue are ſtill happily preſerved? To theſe valuable ſentiments am I indebted, that, in the greateſt heat of my paſſion, I did not forget the duties I owed to friendſhip, a ſiſter, and a family; and that I have avoided a marriage,

marriage, which would have inevitably been followed by remorſe and ſhame. To theſe ſentiments am I indebted, that, after having diſcovered the moſt execrable inſtance of perfidy, I left in Leonora's hands thoſe repeated preſents, of which a mean revenge, like that of La Roche, might have deprived her. I am indebted alſo to the ſame ſentiments, that I reſiſted the laſt and moſt violent efforts of love, at the moment when, though I diſcovered her baſeneſs, I could have ſubmitted to her yoke. And from the ſame cauſe hath ariſen, that juſt averſion which I have to thoſe criminal connections, which conſtitute your pleaſures. When I look back on my former life, the actions reſulting from theſe ſentiments are the only part of my conduct which I can approve. As you have doubtleſs made trial, tell me honeſtly, is there not a pleaſing charm in good actions? Have you not found, that they are attended with their own reward? Have they not given you an inward and compleat ſatisfaction, ſuch as may be expected from happineſs? Had you ever a ſcruple before the performance of a good action, or the leaſt remorſe after it? No, my friend, you had not. Goodneſs is ſtill goodneſs, even to the moſt corrupted minds. I have

found, from experience, that the paſſions have no other effect than that of agitating and diſordering the ſoul, and that the only reſult of your pleaſures was giddineſs and intoxication. Virtue, on the other hand, gives a tranquillity and ſatisfaction to the ſoul; and, by rendering it contented, renders it happy: Virtue alone can accompliſh this work. The paſſions have but one object, and pleaſures are confined to the moment of enjoyment: But virtue embraces the whole man; it fulfils the duty of every ſtation, whether of a citizen, a huſband, a father, or a friend; it is of uſe in every circumſtance of life; and the more it is practiſed, the more it is beloved. Is it then in paſſions or pleaſures, or is it in virtue, that happineſs muſt be ſought?

I preſume I have tired you; read, therefore, no more. It is for myſelf alone I am writing. You, and the reſt of the men of faſhion, who found your title on a contempt of every thing, which, before you were born, attracted the veneration of mankind, would willingly contribute your endeavours to annihilate the idea of *principles*. Do not, I beg, make uſe of ſo ſacred an expreſſion, which your lips would profane. But if there be in ſociety any duties to fulfil, any

rights

rights to regard, or any rules to follow, ſome *principles* of morality will be found neceſſary. I am not ſpeaking either of religion or laws, a diſcuſſion of which would exceed my abilities. I am too profane for the one, and I have not capacity for the other. I allude only to morals in general, of which every man is ſoon inſtructed and convinced, if he will but take ſome little pains, and give an honeſt deciſion. You tell me, with an air of aſſurance, almoſt oracular, that we muſt accommodate our principles to the mode of the age. I do not mean to ſet up for a cenſor before the age of inheritance; but I will venture to ſay, that our principles are to be accommodated to right reaſon and ſound morality, which are the ſame at every age and in every country. On this maxim muſt be formed the man, whether he be conſidered as the friend or the protector of his fellow creatures.

What can be expected from him, who regulates the ſyſtem of his conduct by the mode of the age? What can be expected, but that either he will debaſe himſelf to ſlavery in the midſt of licenciouſneſs; or that his very exiſtence ſhall not be his own; that his virtues ſhall ariſe only from compact, and his merit

from

from ceremony and politeneſs. And yet this is exactly your caſe, and that of every man of mode. Referring every thing to the vain deſire of pleaſing, elated with childiſh pretenſions and trifling ſucceſſes, and confining your whole attention to dreſs and behaviour, you are ignorant of every real duty; you have no idea of thoſe ſacred ties which extend and fortify our exiſtence; and you will ever remain deſtitute of a country, of a friend, of a wife, and of poſterity. With ſuch maxims as you eſpouſe, a man may become the epicure, the coxcomb, or the idol of the day: With virtue and morality, he may become the member of ſociety; and, if circumſtances ſhall permit, the father of a family. To this laſt honour I do not pretend; but, in order to be happy, I will endeavour to pay a regard to ſincerity, to honeſty, and to virtue. Misfortunes have brought my reaſon to maturity. If age can be ſaid to conſiſt in acquiring knowledge before the uſual time, and daring to make uſe of it, I may be placed on an equality with thoſe whoſe age is far advanced. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXIX.

From the Countess de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, May 4.

YEsterday, my dear friend, my brother returned to Paris. I know not his reason for so sudden a departure; but he is far from being more chearful than when he left me. On the contrary, he is so melancholy and weak, that I am under great uneasiness. As it is absolutely necessary to do our utmost to prevent any ill consequences from his present desponding situation, the physician has advised him to go and drink the waters either of Plombieres or Bains *. I shall give the preference to the last mentioned place, because my brother will then be in your neighbourhood, and my anxiety on his account will be greatly relieved. I beg, my dear friend, that you will take the trouble of providing him with a convenient apartment near the waters, because it is recommended to him to drink them at the spring head. You will excuse him from residing at your seat, which is at too great a dis-

* Bains is in Lorraine, at the distance of four leagues from Plombieres.

tance.

tance. Adieu. I envy my brother's ſituation, becauſe he will have ſo many opportunities of enjoying your company.

LETTER XC.

From Madam de Narton *to Madam* de Saint-Sever.

Varennes, May 7.

YOU have given me, my dear Counteſs, the greateſt pleaſure, in acquainting me with your brother's intentions of coming to Bains. I do not, however, ſee any inconveniences that would reſult from his accepting an apartment here. It is not above half a league from the Wells; I drink the waters myſelf; they are always brought to me, and I never found they were leſs efficacious here than at the ſpring. I have, however, complied with your requeſt, and have engaged a convenient lodging. Every thing is in readineſs for the arrival of the Marquis, whom we will endeavour to amuſe in the beſt manner we are able. This will perhaps be the moſt eſſential part of the cure; if he can once recover his chearfulneſs, he will ſoon overcome the reſt of his illneſs: And to this end, however diſguſting the artificial amuſements of Paris

may

may have been, our pleasures, which are simple and natural, may be more successful. I have great expectations likewise from the satisfaction he will receive from the family of Madam de Ferval. Rest, therefore, assured, that I shall neglect nothing, which can possibly contribute to the re-establishment of his former health.

LETTER XCI.

From Madam de Saint-Sever *to Madam* de Narton.

Paris, May 28.

MY brother proposes, my dear friend, to set out for Bains to-morrow morning. It is an equal happiness to him and to myself, that he will have so good an opportunity of receiving assistance from you. His melancholy situation will affect you much; but I have greater hopes from those obliging attentions you will afford him, than from the waters. The amiable Mr. de Ferval will accompany him. This inestimable friend, whose zeal is ever the same, has made all the necessary preparations for the journey. As